

CHRISTIAN NON-RESISTANCE,

IN ALL ITS IMPORTANT BEARINGS,

ILLUSTRATED AND DEFENDED.

BY

ADIN BALLOU

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"Whoso readeth, let him understand."  
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UPDATED

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE UPDATED EDITION

The purpose of this **UPDATED** edition—based on Adin Ballou’s 1846 work *Christian Non-Resistance*—is to make the book more accessible to modern readers. While faithfully preserving Ballou’s ideas, this edition updates the language to remove barriers created by the original 19th-century style, making it easier for contemporary audiences to engage with his message.

All text is set in Palatino Linotype; editorial notes appear in **green**.

Editor

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PREFACE.

Here is a small book written to illustrate and defend a very unpopular doctrine. The author believes this doctrine is as old as Christianity itself, and as true as the New Testament. However, it is a doctrine that is little understood and almost universally criticized. For this reason, the author respectfully asks his readers to set aside their prejudices as much as possible and patiently consider what he has written here. He does not expect everyone to agree with everything in this book—not even those who generally support its overall message. But he hopes that both supporters and critics will be fair, honest, and generous in their evaluations—treating this work as they would want one of their own to be treated, if it dealt with a matter they considered important. The author seeks no personal praise from those who appreciate the book. Let all glory go to the Supreme Source of wisdom and goodness. On the other hand, he hopes those who dislike the work will have the integrity not to dismiss it merely because of who wrote it. Let it be judged solely on its own merits or flaws.

This book is sincerely and clearly addressed to the reason, conscience, and higher moral sense of humanity—not to selfish desires or emotional impulses. May it be read and responded to in that spirit. The sincere seeker of truth will ask, “Does this align with divine truth and righteousness?” Search and find out. The critical reader may search for errors, fallacies, inconsistencies, and weak points. If such are present, they should be uncovered and examined—this is entirely appropriate. But those who take up that task should show themselves to be thoughtful, capable, and honest critics. They should ensure that they truly understand the subject, that they correctly grasp what this work is actually advocating, and that they are able to challenge its core claims with sound and sufficient reasoning. The book’s language and arguments are so clear, precise, and straightforward that any serious misunderstanding or misrepresentation of its message will hardly

be justifiable. This book does not seek controversy, but if it must face it, it deserves fair and honorable treatment.

It is a book written more for the **FUTURE** than for the **PRESENT**, and will likely be more appreciated fifty years from now than it is today. But even now, a better *future* is beginning to emerge, and this book is intended to support that coming age of love and peace. Humanity is beginning a major shift in thought, and the era of military and punitive violence must eventually give way to one of patience, forgiveness, and compassion. A book like this will meet a deep and widespread need felt by many people throughout Christendom. The author was so strongly convinced of this need—based on various signs—that he felt a moral obligation to write this manual to help meet it. By providence, a generous friend offered to cover the financial cost of publication and helped bring this work into being. Through their joint effort, the book now makes its appearance. It is now sent out on its mission of reconciliation. The author feels a calm and confident hope that the blessing of the Most High God will accompany it wherever it goes, that it will bring light to many who live in spiritual darkness, and that it will contribute, in some small way, to that glorious renewal of the world that good people of every age have always longed and prayed for.

A. B.

Hopedale, Mass., April 1846

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CHRISTIAN NON-RESISTANCE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### EXPLANATORY DEFINITIONS.

Different kinds of Non-Resistance – The term Non-Resistance – The term Force, etc. – The term injury, etc. – The term Christian Non-Resistance; its derivation – The key text of Non-Resistance – Necessary applications of Non-Resistance – What a Christian Non-Resistant cannot consistently do – The principle and sub-principle of Non-Resistance – The conclusion.

### DIFFERENT KINDS OF NON-RESISTANCE.

What is Christian Non-Resistance? It is the original and distinct kind of non-resistance taught and demonstrated by Jesus Christ, according to the New Testament scriptures. Are there other kinds of non-resistance? Yes.

1. *Philosophical* non-resistance, which appears in various forms, rejects divine revelation, ignores the authority of Jesus Christ as a divine teacher, excludes explicitly religious ideas, and bases its reasoning on natural logic, what seems fitting, or what seems most practical in terms of outcomes.

2. *Sentimental* non-resistance, also in various forms, is seen as a natural expression of humanity's higher feelings at a more advanced stage of development. It claims to rise above any specific divine revelation, explicit instructions, logical argument, or concern for practical consequences.

3. *Necessitous* non-resistance, often referred to as ► "*passive obedience and non-resistance*," is a concept aggressively promoted by dictators and monarchs as the moral duty and highest virtue of their subjects. It's also recommended by worldly-wise people to the oppressed - when they are too weak to resist *successfully*.

Christian non-resistance has nothing in common with the *necessitous* kind. But it shares *much* with both *philosophical* and *sentimental* non-resistance - being, in fact, the *divine original* of which those are merely human imitations. It embraces all the good found in both, while avoiding the harmful elements of either.

This book is an explanation and defense of Christian non-resistance, as it should be properly understood.

## THE TERM NON-RESISTANCE.

The term "non-resistance" now deserves close examination. It requires some important clarifications. I use it *only* to describe how human beings treat other human beings — not animals, inanimate things, or evil influences. If someone wanted to mock me by saying, "You're a non-resistant, so you must remain *passive* toward all aggressive beings, things, and forces; toward the devil, humans, beasts, birds, snakes, insects, rocks, trees, fire, floods, heat, cold, and storms," I would reply, "*Not at all.*" My idea of non-resistance applies exclusively to conduct between human beings. That's an important limitation of the term.

But I go further and reject the idea that non-resistance means *absolute passivity*, even towards *humans*. I claim the right to offer the strongest possible *moral* resistance - so long as it is not sinful - against every form of human evil. In fact, I believe it is my *duty* to offer that kind of moral resistance. In this sense, non-resistance becomes the highest form of *resistance* to evil. That's another key qualification.

But I don't stop there. There is such a thing as *physical* force that is both harmless and kind. There are situations where using this kind of physical *restraint* is not only acceptable, but even admirable. For example, those suffering from mental illness, delirium, violent anger, intellectual or *moral* incapacity, intoxication, or out-of-control emotions, may try to harm themselves or others. In such cases, friends should step in to physically restrain them - gently, with care, and without harm. And if someone is about to commit a murder, it may be noble for someone to physically intervene — possibly at the cost of their own life — to protect the victim rather than stand by and do nothing. This gives us another important qualification of the term non-resistance.

Non-resistance is not about how we treat animals, objects, or evil forces—it applies only to human beings. Nor does it require *moral* passivity; it primarily concerns *physical* resistance. And even then, it doesn't mean avoiding *all* physical resistance. It means totally refraining from inflicting *injury* as a way of resisting. Non-resistance simply means refusing to repay injury with injury, or evil with evil.

Someone might object: "That's not real non-resistance—the term is misleading!" To that I reply: that's the same kind of argument people made against the Temperance Reformation when the term "*total abstinence*" was introduced. Critics insisted the phrase *must* be taken literally, and called it *absurd*. But temperance advocates clarified, "We mean total abstinence from alcohol." The critics replied, "So you're banning alcohol from the arts and other uses?" The advocates answered, "No, we mean *total abstinence* from *internal* consumption." "But isn't it needed for medical purposes?" they asked. The advocates responded, "Yes, with proper precautions. By *total abstinence* we mean this: ► stopping the use of alcohol as a *beverage*." And still, the critics replied, "Then it's not really *total* abstinence—the term is misleading!"

Yet the phrase “total abstinence” had great power. It captured exactly what was meant, and helped bring about a major shift in public attitudes and behavior. In the same way, “*non-resistance*” is a powerful and meaningful term. It means *refusing* to retaliate with injury. That’s what it is—nothing more, nothing less.

Throughout history, nearly everyone has believed that it’s right—and even *necessary*—for individuals and nations to respond to harm by inflicting more harm, as long as it effectively stops the initial threat. This belief has led to widespread fear, hostility, militarization, violence, torture, and bloodshed. The world has become a vast battlefield—a stage for mutual cruelty and revenge—strewn with skulls, soaked in blood, echoing with cries of pain, and flooded with tears. Humanity has become intoxicated with revenge. Those who can do the most damage in the name of defending life, honor, rights, property, institutions, and laws have been glorified as heroes and rightful rulers.

Non-resistance utterly rejects this terrible lie. It declares that evil cannot be overcome with evil. It appeals directly to the victims of injustice and urges them, in God’s name, to *never again respond to injury with injury*. It promises that by clinging to the law of love - no matter how great the provocation - and choosing to suffer wrong rather than cause it, they will ultimately “overcome evil with good.” In doing so, they will destroy their enemies—not by harming them, but by turning them into true friends.

#### THE TERM FORCE, ETC.

Now that the meaning of *non-resistance* has been explained and clarified, it makes sense to do the same for several other terms commonly used in discussions of this topic. One of these is *force*. Like many others, advocates of non-resistance have sometimes used this word, and related terms, too loosely. This has led to confusion among those unfamiliar with the subject and misrepresentation by its opponents.

According to Walker’s dictionary, force is defined as: “strength, vigor, might, violence, virtue, efficacy, validness, power of law, armament, warlike preparation, destiny, necessity, and fatal compulsion.” If we use *force* as the opposite of *non-resistance* without explanation, people may assume that non-resistance means *absolute passivity*—never using any kind or degree of force under any circumstances.

But the general meaning of *force* is simply “strength, vigor, or might,” whether physical or moral. For example, we speak of various kinds of force: the force of love, the force of truth, the force of public opinion, the force of moral persuasion—even the force of non-resistance. In science, we refer to forces like gravity, cohesion, or repulsion. When speaking of human physical strength, we can also refer to benevolent, kind, or *uninjurious force*—meaning physical effort used to prevent someone from harming themselves or others. In such cases, no one is harmed, and everyone involved may actually be helped.

Since non-resistance does not mean *absolute passivity* (doing nothing), but rather allows for certain kinds and degrees of moral and physical "strength" or force depending on the situation, we must avoid using *force* as if it always *opposes* non-resistance—unless we clearly mean violence, war, revenge, or destructive force. In such cases, we will use the term *injurious force*. All forms of *injurious force* between human beings are incompatible with *non-resistance*. Throughout this work, we will be careful to qualify the term *force* as either *injurious* or *uninjurious*.

*Moral force*, as indicated above, means *moral power*—the effective influence of moral "strength, vigor, or might." *Physical force*, by contrast, refers to *material force*—the action of one physical body on another, where the stronger physically overpowers the weaker. Like *moral force*, *physical force* can be good or bad, harmful or harmless, depending on how it is used.

For instance, when an immoral adult leads an innocent young person astray through bad examples, harmful advice, false beliefs, and other evil influences—without using physical force—they are using an *injurious moral force* that leads the youth away from virtue. On the other hand, when a good person helps someone turn away from wrongdoing using good examples, wise counsel, and uplifting influence, that's a helpful and *beneficial moral force*. Similarly, when someone uses physical force to damage another person's life, mind, character, or wellbeing, that is *injurious physical force*. But when someone restrains a violent madman, holds down a delirious patient, stops a child from hurting a sibling, or physically intervenes to prevent a rape, or any similar act—doing so without causing harm and with the intent to help—all of this is considered a *beneficial, rightful, uninjurious physical force*.

## THE TERM INJURY

I use the term *injury* in a somewhat specific sense—to refer to any kind of moral influence or physical force that one person exerts on another, where the natural *result* is to damage or weaken their *life, body, mind, moral or religious values, or overall well-being*—regardless of whether the person affected is innocent or guilty, harmless or harmful, sane or insane, adult or child.

Some dictionary definitions describe an "*injury*" as "harm or wrong *unjustly* done to someone," which implies that hurting someone who "*deserves it*" isn't actually an injury. I completely reject this idea. I believe an *injury* is still an *injury*—whether the person deserves it or not, whether it was done on purpose or by accident, whether the intention was good or bad; the fact remains that it is still an *injury*, based on my definition.

Now, someone might ask, "What if God's law says it's okay to hurt someone in certain cases if they've done wrong?" Then, clearly, the doctrine of non-resistance would be shown to be false.

“What if hurting someone a little could prevent something much worse from happening?” Then we’d be justifying doing wrong to produce good—a mindset that keeps the world stuck in its current state.

“What if the person hurting someone honestly thought they were doing it to help?” That just means they were sincerely *mistaken* — not blameworthy.

“What if someone injures another according to the law, and without hatred or revenge?” Then they’ve committed an *un-Christian* act, though without bad intentions. The action is still wrong; their intentions may be respected; and they should be guided toward a better understanding of what is right.

But in *every* case, we must ask: was *harm* done? And when deciding that, we shouldn’t ask if the person was guilty or innocent, whether it was done with good or bad intentions, or even if the spirit behind the act was kind or mean. If the act truly caused *injury*, then it goes against the doctrine of Christian non-resistance. No one who recognizes an act as harmful can repeat it for any reason without going against God’s law.

That’s how I’ll be using the terms *injury*, *injurer*, *injurious*, and so on, in this book.

A critic might now raise some objections to challenge my definition. For example, suppose a man’s leg, hand, or eye is so diseased that it must be removed to save his life. But if such a body part is considered a physical ability, then removing it would seem to be an injury. My answer: the body part is already ruined. The real question isn’t whether a doctor should damage it—but whether he should remove it to save the person’s life. That’s not an *injury*—it’s actually an absolute *benefit*. That case is clear.

But suppose a government official is ordered to remove a healthy leg, hand, or eye as punishment or to set an example to deter others from committing crimes. That is absolute *injury*, done for seemingly good reasons—but still an *injury*. Next, imagine a very sick child needing unpleasant treatment to recover, which can only be done by physical force. Or an adult who is mentally ill in the same situation. Or a person with rabies, suffering from terrible paroxysms and needing to be confined, even though they resist during their lucid moments. Or imagine someone who can’t control violent urges and must be kept away from others to prevent harm, even though they refuse to accept this. Or a corrupt man, disturbed and angered when his wrongdoing is publicly exposed or called out by a morally upright person.

In all these cases, someone’s *will* is opposed, their freedom restricted, and their feelings hurt. So, the question is: does forcing, restraining, exposing, or criticizing people—even if it’s necessary and kindly done—count as *injuring* them? Isn’t *emotional* distress sometimes even worse than physical harm?

My response: It's not a person's thoughts, feelings, or opinions that define what is or isn't harmful to them. Love can feel like burning coals. Truth can disturb. Kind and necessary restraints can be emotionally painful. A person might feel miserable when their harmful will is denied. Some would rather suffer physical pain than have their sins exposed or hear hard truths. Such people often prefer *harm* to help. In those moments, they don't have the clarity to choose what's best for them.

So, we can't use *their* wishes or feelings as a measure of what's *good*—neither for themselves nor for others. Is it *good* to let a stubborn child avoid life-saving treatment? Is it *good* to let a mentally ill adult have total freedom to hurt themselves or others? Is it *good* to let someone act out in dangerous ways because they refuse supervision? Is it *good* to let a wicked person do great harm in secret, without being exposed or corrected? These things are not good for anyone.

What is good is for people in such situations to be stopped, restrained, corrected, or criticized—with *uninjurious* moral or physical force that causes no true harm, is guided by kindness, and used with wisdom. If someone's will is opposed and their feelings hurt under these conditions, it is not an injury but a true *benefit* to them and everyone involved.

Someone might say, "But you can't do those things without *injuring* people. It's not possible."

Really? Are we saying we can't care for sick children, control delirious adults, protect people from harming themselves and others, restrain violent individuals, expose the dishonest, or correct the wrongdoer—without actually *injuring* them! Then we're saying that nothing good can be done without doing harm.

Humans are imperfect, and sometimes mistakes or minor injuries may happen. But once people's reason and common sense are truly committed to the right principle of action, they will rarely fail to carry out these duties in a way that satisfies everyone.

Still, one might ask, "What if harmless methods aren't enough? Can we break bones, wound bodies, or do other harmful things in extreme situations?" The answer is: *Never*. The principle of *non-injury* must be upheld without exception. It's beyond measure, and must be protected at all costs. If something can't be done without causing harm, then it must be left undone.

But in reality, such extreme cases are largely hypothetical. The truth is, if something truly cannot be done without causing harm, it's usually something that probably shouldn't be done at all. Or if it *is* done, it would have been better left alone. Experience with treating people who are mentally ill has already shown that far more can be accomplished through carefully and thoughtfully applied



*non-harmful* methods than through any approach that involves even a mix of harmful ones.

Assuming that my definition and use of the words *injure, injury, injurer, injurious*, etc., are clear and not likely to be misunderstood, I'll move on.

#### THE TERM CHRISTIAN NON-RESISTANCE.

Where did the term *Christian non-resistance* come from? The idea of non-resistance comes from the command: "*Resist not evil*," found in Matthew 5:39. The phrase "*resist not*" is a verb, but when we turn it into a noun, it becomes *non-resistance*. This word is believed to express the *principle* more clearly and powerfully than any other, and best captures the *duty* Jesus taught in that verse—so it has become the standard term.

We call it *Christian non-resistance* to distinguish it as the true, original teaching of Jesus Christ—not just a *philosophical* idea, a *sentimental* belief, or a stance taken out of *necessity*. In this sense, *Christian non-resistance* literally means the kind of non-resistance Jesus taught and lived. We understand how it works, where it applies, and what its limits are by reading the New Testament.

So what are its applications and limits - how far does it go? I've already offered a general explanation, but let me be more specific. My goal is to apply non-resistance exactly as Jesus did—no more and no less.

It's easy to either go too far or not far enough. Some people — the ultra-radicals — go too far. Others — the ultra-conservatives — don't go far enough. Although both sides claim to follow Jesus' teachings, they each interpret his words in ways that match their own perspectives.

The radicals latch onto dramatic or exaggerated phrases, and make Jesus *appear* to have taught *more* than he actually meant. The conservatives, on the other hand, subtly weaken or explain away the core of his message, making it *seem* like he meant *less* than he truly did.

Thankfully, there's a reliable rule that helps expose both of these errors when interpreting any verse: "Look at the context; compare with similar verses; examine the examples; and consider the overall spirit of Christianity." If an interpretation *aligns* with all of these, it's probably correct. If not, it's probably mistaken.

#### THE KEY TEXT OF NON-RESISTANCE.

Let's now take a closer look at Matthew 5:39: "I say to you, do not resist evil..." This single verse—where the idea of non-resistance originates—if properly understood, offers a full explanation of what the doctrine means, where it applies, and what its limits are. It's exactly the kind of instruction that can be easily misunderstood to mean more—or less—than Jesus actually intended. It's a powerful,

concise statement, and to grasp it fully, we must pay close attention to the surrounding verses.

So what did Jesus mean by the word “evil”? And what did he mean by “resist”? There are different types of *evil*:

1. *Natural evil*: physical pain, loss, or damage by forces without moral agency.
2. *Moral evil*: sin in general.
3. *Spiritual evil*: temptations that lead us into sin.
4. *Personal evil*: wrongs inflicted by others: affronts, insults, injuries.

Which kind of evil was Jesus talking about when he said, “Resist not evil”? Was he talking about fires, floods, famine, diseases, or wild animals? *No*. So he wasn’t telling us not to resist *natural evils*.

Was he talking about sin in general? *No*. So he wasn’t saying we should ignore *moral evil*.

Was he talking about temptations—inner urges to do wrong? *No*. So he wasn’t forbidding us from resisting the devil, our own sinful desires, temptation, or other *spiritual evils*.

Was he referring to *personal evil* - injury inflicted by one person on another? *Yes*. The context makes this clear: “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,’ but I say to you, do not resist evil.” In other words, don’t retaliate against personal outrage, insult, affront - *injury*. Here, “*evil*” clearly refers to *personal injury*, or harm caused by people to other people.

So what did Jesus mean by “*resist not*”? There are several ways to *resist* personal injury, whether threatened or inflicted:

- *Passive resistance* – staying still, silent, and doing nothing. Did Jesus forbid this? *No*.
- *Active, moral resistance* – standing firm, speaking gently but firmly against wrongdoing, offering correction or protest without harm. Did he mean to forbid this? *No*.
- *Moral and physical resistance but without harm* – such as restraining someone from hurting others, without causing injury. Was Jesus forbidding this? *No*.
- *Violent resistance that causes personal injury* – striking back, retaliating with injury, or punishing to get even. *Yes*. This is what Jesus was forbidding.

His clear teaching is this: ► **Do not respond to personal injury by inflicting personal injury in return.**

I’ll explain this further in the next chapter, with scriptural support. But for now, this is enough to clarify the core meaning and limits of non-resistance.



This teaching applies to everyone, in every area of life. It assumes that people will sometimes be harmed or threatened—and instructs them not to respond with harm, whether for revenge, self-defense, or to stop an attack. If someone strikes them on one cheek, they are to offer the other—not strike back. If their friend is killed, or someone takes out their eye or tooth or causes other harm, they must not return evil for evil, insult for insult, or hate for hate.

However, they are not forbidden from stopping or preventing harm in ways that cause no injury. In fact, they have a duty to use any *uninjurious* means available, whether moral or physical, to protect and care for others. They should always aim to promote the safety, welfare, happiness, and sanctity of all human beings—whenever they have the opportunity

### NECESSARY APPLICATIONS OF NON-RESISTANCE.

The practical applications of this doctrine extend to all situations in human relationships where one person suffers harm from another, or is at imminent risk of harm. This includes any scenario where harm inflicted by one person upon another might be repelled, punished, or prevented.

There are four general positions a person may find themselves in when considering whether to respond to harm with harm:

1. As an individual.
2. As part of a lawless group of individuals.
3. As a member of a lawfull voluntary association.
4. As a supporter of a government at the state or national level.

In any of these situations, people may respond to harm with harm, either through self-defense, retaliation, or punitive measures.

*As individuals*, they may act immediately using their personal resources, or they may act through agents—people employed to carry out their will.

*As part of a lawless group*, they might participate in cooperative violence (whether *open* or *secret*), either directly or through selected agents or recognized leaders.

*As members of lawful, voluntary, associations* they may have a significant influence, without resorting to violence, by using speech, the press, education, religion, etc., to mislead, corrupt, prejudice, and incite others to evil actions against one another. In this way, to deliberately encourage and lead others to harm one another under the guise of serving a noble cause—whether for religious or humanitarian purposes—is essentially the same as directly responding to harm with harm through physical means. The harm caused might be much greater, but the *moral* responsibility remains no less significant.

*As supporters of a government* —whether civil, military, or a combination of both—people are *morally* responsible for the constitutions, laws, institutions, and practices

that they have pledged to support, that they openly approve of, or that they rely on to secure their personal welfare. This also includes the systems they *passively* accept, without objecting or withdrawing their support.

Therefore, if a government or its constitution requires, authorizes, or permits war, bloodshed, capital punishment, slavery, or any form of serious injury—whether in offense or defense—anyone who has pledged to support that government is as responsible for every such act as if they had done it themselves..

People are not *morally* accountable if a government acts unlawfully or violates its own constitution. But they are responsible for all actions carried out according to the law and constitution. The army is *their* army. The navy, *their* navy. The militia, *their* militia. The gallows, *their* gallows. The pillory, *their* pillory. The whipping post, *their* whipping post. The branding iron, *their* branding iron. The prison, *their* prison. The dungeon, *their* dungeon. And the institution of slavery, *their* institution

When the majority in government declares war, it is *their* war. All the killing, violence, destruction, theft, and suffering carried out under that declaration—according to the laws of war—are *their* responsibility. A person cannot excuse themselves by saying they were part of an *anti-war minority*. They were part of the government, and they swore, affirmed, or pledged to support it—allowing the majority to act on *their* behalf. By doing so, they bound themselves, with that *anti-Christian* obligation, to all the crimes and atrocities that come with war.

It is therefore *their* war. Its murders are *their* murders. Its terrible injuries, *their* injuries. All are carried out with *their* approval—whether explicit or implicit.

There is no escape from this moral responsibility, except by conscientiously withdrawing from such a government and protesting against the parts of its constitution and laws that are clearly *anti-Christian*. The person must cease to be a pledged supporter and complicit beneficiary of such a hostile system.

#### WHAT A CHRISTIAN NON-RESISTANT CANNOT CONSISTENTLY DO.

It will become clear from the explanation above that a true Christian who believes in non-resistance *cannot*, with deliberate intention, knowledge, or conscious choice, go against their principles by committing any of the following actions:

1. They cannot kill, harm, or cause any serious injury to any person, even in self-defense, or to protect their family or anything they care about.
2. They cannot take part in any lawless conspiracy, mob, riot, or disorderly group that causes or supports serious personal injury.
3. They cannot be a member of any group, no matter how lawful, respectable, or allowed by society, that teaches or supports war, capital punishment, or any kind of serious personal injury as an acceptable or right practice.

4. They cannot serve as an officer, soldier, chaplain, or any other position in the army, navy, or militia of any country, state, or leader.

5. They cannot be a supporter, officer, voter, agent, prosecutor, or any kind of approved member of a government whose constitution and laws allow or tolerate war, slavery, capital punishment, or any other form of serious personal injury.

6. They cannot be a member of any corporation or organization whose rules allow or require resorting to violence or governmental force in order to carry out its business.

7. They cannot do anything personally or through someone else, nor can they encourage or approve of anyone else doing anything, that would cause serious harm to someone, threaten harm, or make it certain that harm will be done to any person.

These are the necessary consequences and applications of the Christian non-resistance doctrine. The reader should be careful not to misunderstand the principles outlined here. The foundation of this belief and its specific qualities have been clearly laid out. It should not be said that the doctrine opposes all religion, government, society, laws, order, or rules. It does not oppose these things in general. In fact, it supports them in their highest and best forms. It only opposes *those* religions, governments, social organizations, laws, rules, and systems that go directly against Christ's law — those that sanction taking "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth," by assuming it's right to *injure someone who has injured you, or do evil to someone who had done evil to you*.

#### THE PRINCIPLE AND SUB-PRINCIPLE OF NON-RESISTANCE.

This chapter can appropriately end with a brief reflection on the doctrine we've been discussing—specifically in terms of the *foundational principle* it is based on, to the *sub-principle* that embodies its moral basis, and the rule of duty that sums up all its applications.

What is the *foundational principle* behind it? It comes from the very heart of God. It is based on PERFECT LOVE—absolute, independent, flawlessly wise and holy *love*—that sets God apart from all lesser beings. When this *Divine* love is infused into ordinary human kindness, it elevates it to the highest form of goodness. As Scripture says, "*Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*" Or, in the words of the beloved John, "*Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.*" This love is not just natural affection or romantic emotion. It is a pure, informed, and conscientious *principle*—a divine motivation that instinctively and consistently leads us to do good to others, regardless of whether *they* do good or evil. It acts independently of external circumstances, and because it is completely unselfish, it isn't influenced by whether the recipient is deserving or not. It doesn't ask, "Do they love me? Have they helped me? Have they treated me fairly? Will I be rewarded? Or, do they hate me, hurt me, curse me, and judge me?" No matter how others

behave—whether with love or hate, kindness or harm—this love says: “I will do what is right. I will keep loving. I will do good. I will never harm, not even those who harm me. *I will overcome evil with good.*”

This kind of love doesn’t depend on the goodness of others—it finds its own reason for doing good to every moral being. Jesus embodied this divine love completely. He took the commandment, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” from the old Mosaic law <sup>1</sup>—an idea long buried under misunderstanding—and brought it to life with divine clarity. He showed that “*neighbor*” means any person: a stranger, an enemy, someone who hates you—anyone in need, or at risk of suffering because of our selfishness, anger, or contempt. Knowing that worldly wisdom had long justified harming those who harm us, hating enemies, and destroying those who destroy, Jesus turned that logic on its head. He abolished the old rule of retaliation and taught instead the duty of endless patience, mercy, and kindness.

The imperfect religions of the world, worldly philosophy, and selfish vengeance had all agreed that ➤ “*there’s a limit to how much you should put up with.*” Jesus dismissed this harsh idea with divine authority, and instead taught us to always and faithfully follow the law of love—even toward those who hurt, insult, or oppose us, just as much as toward those who help and love us.

He said: “*Do not take a life for a life, or an eye for an eye, or a tooth for a tooth. Do not strike back at someone who hits you. If someone asks, give to them. Don’t turn away someone who needs to borrow. Love your enemies. Bless those who curse you. Do good to those who hate you. Pray for those who insult and persecute you. That way, you will be children of your Father in Heaven. For He lets the sun shine on both the good and the evil. He sends rain on both the just and the unjust. If you love only those who love you, what makes you better than tax collectors or sinners?*”

*Be like your Father in Heaven.* This is the light of truth shining from the heart of the Infinite Father, and reflected onto our dark world through the life of Jesus Christ. What are the sentimental ramblings of soft-hearted poets, the fancy theories of worldly philosophers, or the dramatic rituals of angry religions, compared to the powerful truth spoken by the Messiah?

All-perfect, independent, self-sustaining, and unchanging love — DIVINE LOVE — is the source of Christian non-resistance.

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1. “You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge against the members of your people; you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18).

What is the *sub-principle* that embodies its moral basis? *The inherent power of good to overcome evil.* The world's wisdom has always trusted the power of *injury*, fear, and EVIL as the main way to oppose evil. It has relied on this for all of history. People have been raised to believe that safety and security depend mostly on the ability to harm those who do wrong. So they have always tried to gather enough harmful power to scare off enemies and keep others in line. Their message has been: "Don't come near. Don't touch my property. Don't insult me. Don't violate my rights. Don't attack me. Be fair and respectful. Cooperate with me, and we'll be friends. But if you don't—I'll go to war. I'll get revenge. I'll make you suffer *more* than you made me suffer. I'll kill, torture, or imprison you. You'll regret crossing me. So be afraid, and leave me alone."

So thoroughly deceived are the people of this world, with *faith* in *injury* as their primary form of protection—that hardly one in a thousand, at first hearing, sees the doctrine of non-resistance as anything other than a declaration of cowardice on the one hand, and an invitation to chaos, lawlessness, and violence on the other. They seem to think all people are so violent that the moment we give up the threat of extreme personal harm, we'll all be murdered, our families wiped out, and total disaster will follow. Most people don't realize how completely they rely on the grim *god of violence and harm* for protection. They worship this god through the sword, the gallows, and the prison cell. They praise him in armies, navies, militias, warships, forts, weapons stockpiles, criminal laws, court sentences, guns, knives, and more. If we propose getting rid of all these tools of injury, and treating people only with kindness and non-harming—even those who do great wrong—they scream in fear: "These people are turning the world upside down!" "Don't torture us before it's time!" "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" <sup>2</sup> "Great is the sword, the noose, and the glorious power to kill or injure sinners at will! What would happen to society if we got rid of war, executions, and other violent punishments?!"

And so, on this altar of violence, they have sacrificed more people than could populate twenty Earths <sup>3</sup>—only to make violence more organized and widespread across the world. Still, their god is INJURY, and at his bloody altar of revenge and cruelty, they continue to worship, surrounded by the clash of weapons and the cries of a bleeding world.

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2. "*Great is Diana of the Ephesians*" is a phrase from Acts 19 in the Bible, where a riot breaks out in the city of Ephesus after the Apostle Paul's preaching threatens the worship of Diana (the Roman name for Artemis), the city's patron goddess. Local artisans, whose livelihood depended on selling idols of Diana, incited the crowd, leading them to chant the phrase for two hours in defense of their religion and economy. The event highlights how early Christianity challenged established religious and social systems. The phrase describes mob mentality, or staunch defense of tradition.

3. See note 4 on page 109.

## THE CONCLUSION.

But the Son of the Highest, the great self-sacrificing Non-Resistant, is our prophet, priest, and king. Even though the people of the world have ignored his voice for a long time, they will eventually listen. He teaches that only *good* has the power to defeat *evil*. That's why he commands his followers to respond to *evil* only by doing *good*. This is the sub-principle of Christian non-resistance. ► **"Evil can be overcome only with good."** The foundation of this belief is our faith that *goodness* is more powerful than *evil*, truth is stronger than lies, right greater than wrong, and love over hatred. Faith, then, in the inherent superiority of good over evil, truth over error, right over wrong, love over hatred, is the immediate moral basis of our doctrine. Because of this faith, we no longer put our trust in harming others to fight evil. Instead, we now place all our hope in kindness, generosity, and treating others without harm — as our only true weapons in the battle against wrongdoers. So, instead of believing in harm as a way to fight evil — as we've been taught — we now place all our trust in *kindness*, *generosity*, and refusing to cause *injury*, as the only truly effective way to oppose *evil-doers*. Since we no longer try or hope to defeat evil by using more evil, we raise the cross as our flag, and above it we place the shining banner of love, celebrating the sacred message written on its pure fabric: "DO NOT FIGHT INJURY WITH INJURY." Let this be the guiding rule for our actions from now on — the steady compass we follow across the stormy seas of human reform — until all people, all governments, and all parts of society are shaped to reflect this great commandment from God: "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." Then shall *Love* (God by his most sublime name) "be all in all."

The earth, so long a slaughter-field,  
Shall yet an Eden bloom;  
The *tiger* to the *lamb* shall yield,  
And *War* descend the tomb:  
For all shall feel the Savior's love,  
Reflected from the cross -  
That love, that non-resistant love,  
Which triumphed on the cross.



## CHAPTER II.

### SCRIPTURAL PROOFS.

Matt. 5:38-41, a proof text – Evasive constructions of the text – Reason for noticing these evasions – Second proof, Matt. 5:43-48 – Third proof, forgiveness – Further important proofs – Apostolic testimonies – General view of the evidence – The primitive Christians – Testimony of Celsus and Gibbons.

The previous chapter gave a clear explanation and detailed discussion of the doctrine of Christian non-resistance. This chapter will present the biblical evidence supporting its truth. It is claimed that this doctrine was taught and demonstrated by Jesus Christ. If that can be proven, then everyone who acknowledges Him as their Lord and Master should feel obligated to accept the doctrine as divinely inspired. To answer such a question, the New Testament must be our main source. From its accounts—interpreted fairly—we are to learn what Jesus Christ taught, how He acted, and what the core spirit of His religion is. The gospel writers and the apostles will serve as our witnesses in this matter.

#### MATTHEW, 5: 38-41, A PROOF TEXT.

In Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says: "You have heard that it was said, '*An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.*' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to them the other also. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles." (Matthew 5:38–41)

What does this language mean exactly, and what does it teach? Who is Jesus referring to when He says, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"? He is referring to Moses and those who interpreted his laws.

Now consider the following passages:

Regarding injury done to a pregnant woman:

"If there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." (Exodus 21:23–25)

Concerning harm done to another person:

"If anyone injures their neighbor, whatever they have done must be done to them: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. As they have injured the other, so they are to be injured." (Leviticus 24:19–20)

In the case of a false witness:

“The judges must make a thorough investigation, and if the witness proves to be a liar, giving false testimony against a fellow Israelite, then do to the false witness as that witness intended to do to the other party. You must purge the evil from among you. Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.” (Deuteronomy 19:18–21)

These verses give us a complete picture of the types of personal injuries that were permitted under the Mosaic law, ranging from capital punishment down to the being whipped. They also clearly express the purpose behind such punishments: “So you shall purge the evil from among you.”

So, did Jesus refer to these laws of Moses and their enforcement? Who can doubt it? And if so, did He mean to uphold them or to abolish them? Clearly, He meant to abolish them, as His words are directly opposed in meaning: “BUT I tell you, do not resist an evil person.”

*How* are we to interpret this? *Not* as those who respond with “life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth...” Instead, He says: “If someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn to them the other also.”

In other words, instead of hitting back or going to court to have your attacker punished—as the old teachings permitted—be willing to be struck again. If someone uses the law to take your coat, do not hold back your cloak. Don’t countersue to get your stolen property returned. If people force you to go where they want, go without resistance. Become their prisoner without protest. ► **Don’t resist injury with injury. Don’t oppose evil by inflicting evil.**

It was once commanded that evil be suppressed and prevented by punishment and retaliation, but now Jesus says: “do not resist an evil person” by inflicting evil. Nothing could be clearer: in as much as Moses and his interpreters taught the use of penal punishment to respond to wrongdoing and suppress it, Jesus directly *forbids* that. He instructs His followers never to respond to evil with punishment. They are not allowed to repay harm for harm—neither on their own, nor through *legal action*. Is this a fair and accurate interpretation of Jesus’s words? If it is, then the principle of Non-Resistance is already proven by this one passage. But this interpretation will surely be challenged.

#### EVASIVE CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE TEXT.

Some will argue that Christ’s words in the quoted passage are highly figurative and emphatic in their expression—that there’s a risk of interpreting them too literally—and that they must be properly qualified. I agree, and I have interpreted them accordingly. I first examined their reference to the teachings of Moses, and then concluded that Christ’s prohibition is exactly equal in scope to the Mosaic command. The kind of resistance to evil that Moses endorsed and instructed, Jesus



clearly rejects and forbids. His prohibition precisely matches the scope of the old law's allowances and commands. This is the only fair and reasonable interpretation of the great Teacher's words. If someone were to claim that Jesus prohibits all forms and degrees of resistance to evil, they could only support that claim by insisting on a strictly literal reading of the passage—and in doing so, they would make Jesus contradict Himself, His own example, and the common sense of humanity. On the other hand, if someone were to claim that Jesus did not intend to repeal and forbid all the personal and legal punishments for wrongdoing authorized by the earlier Mosaic laws, they would find themselves in just as troubling a contradiction. I have seen respected opponents caught in this very dilemma.

#### EVASION FIRST.

Someone might say, "I doubt that Jesus was referring to the sayings of Moses quoted from Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. He must have been referring to certain corrupt Rabbinical interpretations of the law, and to popular sayings among the people that were used to justify frequent and excessive revenge." But is there any proof of this? None—it's pure speculation. And even if it were true, why didn't Jesus indicate that he was only condemning *abuses* of the law? Moreover, what *interpretations* or popular sayings could possibly go beyond the original laws themselves? They already state the *lex talionis*—the law of retaliation—in its most extreme form: ► **"life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, breach for breach, wound for wound, stripe for stripe."** It would be hard to exaggerate or overinterpret such direct commands. This argument is weak and unconvincing.

#### EVASION SECOND.

Another person insists that Christ was only emphasizing the importance of carrying out legal penalties—and of using lawful means of injuring assailants—with the right attitude. "He doesn't forbid the *action* itself," they say, "but only a vindictive, revengeful *spirit* while doing it. Life should be taken for life, and various punishments should be given to wrongdoers as just retribution. Self-defense should be upheld, even to the point of killing in extreme cases—but all of this should be done without *revenge*, without unnecessary cruelty, and with *genuine love* for the offender, as well as with sacred reverence for the law." In this way, Jesus is conveniently interpreted as saying virtually nothing new—nothing in practice that Moses and the earlier teachers hadn't already said. But did they ever authorize *personal* hatred, malice, revenge, or wanton cruelty in carrying out legal penalties?

Didn't they positively forbid such attitudes and behaviors?

"You shall not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people."

"You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not allow sin upon him."

“In righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.” — Leviticus 19

“If there is a dispute between men and they go to court, so the judges can judge them, they shall acquit the righteous and condemn the wicked. And if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall have him lie down and be beaten in his presence, according to what he deserves. He may give him up to forty stripes, but no more—lest if he exceeds that and beats him too severely, your brother will be degraded in your sight.” — Deuteronomy 25:1–3. See also: Deuteronomy 16:18,20; 17:2–12; 19:15; and Exodus 23:1–8.

From these and other parts of the Mosaic writings, we can clearly see that, although the law was harsh, it did not approve of personal hatred, revenge, or cruelty when punishing the guilty. So, to suggest that Christ was only condemning *only* a personal, spiteful, malicious, or cruel spirit in executing punishments is to reduce him to merely *echoing* Moses and his interpreters. But Christ goes further—he absolutely opposes the *deed*: the *act* of inflicting evil on offenders. By striking down the *deed*, he also removes the *spirit* behind it. Pretending to act out of *love* only makes the act of killing or torturing someone even more offensive to Christian morality. It's like a mother gently *kissing* her child while crushing it to death, or a charming young woman embracing a man while slowly stabbing him in the chest with a fine dagger. Death is still death, torture is still torture, and harm is still harm—no matter how gently or politely it is done. In fact, there's almost a certain appropriateness in having hard-hearted, severe-natured people carry out such sentences.

### EVASION THIRD.

Another argument claims that Jesus was simply teaching the duty of leaving all punishment to the courts and the government—that he was forbidding personal revenge and only instructing his followers to seek justice for their injuries through legal means. But this is an even weaker excuse than the last. There's nothing in the passage to suggest that this was his intention. On the contrary, he commands non-resistance both in cases of personal assault and legal injustice.

*“If someone strikes you on your right cheek, offer the other also. If someone sues you in court and takes your coat, let him have your cloak too. If he arrests you and forces you to go with him, don't resist.”*

That doesn't sound like advice to take people to court for wrongs, or encouragement to rely on magistrates for vengeance. He *doesn't* say, “You've heard it said, ‘Let every man take vengeance into his own hands and settle his own disputes’; but I say to you, go to the government, report to the authorities, take all your grievances to court for a fair ruling.” Not a word of that.

And nothing like it appears anywhere in the New Testament. Jesus Christ never brought a lawsuit against anyone, nor did he ever teach his followers to do so. In

fact, had he acted that way, it would have made a mockery of his divine dignity. It would have exposed him to scorn, as someone indulging in human foolishness.

#### EVASION FOURTH.

Another person assumes that Jesus meant only to discourage *petty* vindictiveness, retaliation, and lawsuits over trivial matters—but not to forbid these things in *extreme* cases, on a larger scale, or where significant interests are at stake. This interpretation is *convenient*, but deeply *flawed*. Who gets to decide what counts as a serious case versus a trivial one? Naturally, the injured party does. It's up to the *individual* to decide whether the wrongs committed against them are serious enough to justify going to court, retaliating, or resisting personally. And the result? *Minor* offenses, insults, and injuries are *rarely* seen as trivial—almost everything becomes "too serious" to be tolerated. Jesus gives no hint that he's making any distinction between *great* and *small* evils. He doesn't say that his followers should avoid resisting ordinary personal injuries, but that more serious offenses may be dealt with through resistance and retaliation. Arguments like these are simply the worldly mind looking for loopholes—trying to justify, under the name of Christianity, behaviors that the Son of God has completely forbidden, both in spirit and in action.

#### EVASION FIFTH.

Another person boldly claims that Jesus never intended the command, "Resist not evil..." to serve as a *general rule*, but that it was only meant for his early followers living under oppressive rulers. In *such* times, resistance would have been pointless; it was better, they argue, to simply endure patiently. But what a shameful kind of expediency this attributes to the Savior! What a *skulking prudence*! Don't resist evil when you're powerless to stop it—submit to tyranny and abuse when it's too strong for you. Turn the other cheek, bow down like a beaten dog—only because you have no better option! But then, when you're strong enough to fight back and stand a chance of winning—strike like a beast! To anyone who can extract that kind of logic from Jesus's words, I'd say the only *general rule* they've found is: "*Submit* when you *must*, but *resist* violently when you *can*." If this interpretation weren't so completely insulting to the character of Christ—and if it weren't so clearly unsupported by even a hint in the context—it might be worth trying to refute it seriously. As it stands, just stating the idea is enough to discredit it completely.

#### EVASION SIXTH.

Still another person argues that Jesus, while he did teach strict non-resistance as a duty for his followers in all matters *strictly religious*, nonetheless left them completely free in *secular* matters to resist, to sue, and even to wage war as they saw fit. According to this view, when dealing with purely religious obligations—such as spreading Christianity by divinely approved means—believers must endure every kind of personal abuse, insult, persecution, and violence without offering any

resistance, whether by force or through legal action. But outside of that—when acting as ordinary people in the world, as politicians, merchants, tradesmen, or money-makers—they are supposedly free to follow the rules of worldly self-interest and to resist anyone, even to the point of killing, if their lives, freedom, or property are threatened. This claim rests on the same weak and unstable ground as the others, and there isn't a single respectable argument to support it. In fact, just stating it clearly should be enough to show how completely indefensible it is.

#### EVASION FINAL.

Finally, another person says he doesn't know what Jesus *really* meant to teach in the passage we've been considering—but he's confident it couldn't have been a prohibition of capital punishment, penal consequences for crime, defensive war, or personal self-defense in cases of serious assault. Why? Because Jesus had previously said, in the very same sermon:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For truly I say unto you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or tittle shall in any way pass from the law until all is fulfilled. Whoever, therefore, shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach others to do so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:18–20)

And what conclusion is drawn from these words? The objector reasons that since Moses commanded "*life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand*," Jesus could not have intended to repeal or invalidate that command. No matter what else he meant, he surely wasn't forbidding what Moses had directly ordered, since not even *one jot or tittle* of the law was to pass away until everything was fulfilled.

To this, I respond: this is more of a *nitpick* than a sincere argument. It sounds more like something an infidel might say than a Christian. The objection is essentially accusing Jesus of contradicting himself. First, he says, "You have heard that it was said [by Moses and his interpreters], 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth'; but I say to you, do not resist evil in that way. If someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also." Then, on the other hand, he says, "Whoever breaks even the least commandment [such as '*eye for eye*'], and teaches others to do so, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven..."

So, the objector says that Jesus both forbids and upholds the same Mosaic command, in the same sermon. If this were truly a contradiction, it would work just as well for the doctrine of non-resistance as against it. If Jesus contradicts himself here, then he's as much of an authority on repealing the law as he is on affirming it. But if his words are to be treated as invalid because they seem contradictory, that

kind of reasoning only serves the skeptic or the infidel—it undermines all his teachings. I’ve actually heard this very objection from the mouth of an elderly Hopkinsian minister, not from a skeptic.

So what good is this objection? If it proves anything against my interpretation of Matthew 5:38–41, it proves far too much. It would tie us completely to the old Jewish law—every “*jot and tittle*” of it. We’d be obligated not only to the moral law, but also to the ceremonial laws, sacrifices, circumcision, and the entire penal code of Moses! No Christian would accept this conclusion. We all agree that many of those commandments have been repealed. Jesus and Paul are both clear about that. But that doesn’t mean any of those laws were *destroyed* or left *unfulfilled*.

Some laws have been transformed from symbols into realities, from *shadows* into *substance*. Others have disappeared in their *external* form but remain fully alive in *spirit*. Every law has either accomplished its purpose or continues to do so within the deeper truths of Christianity. When Jesus said he came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it, did he mean he came to preserve every literal detail—the rituals, the symbols, the external forms? No—he meant he came to fulfill them in their essence, in the spiritual reality they were pointing toward.

When Jesus abolished swearing *oaths*, did he abolish *truth*? Did he lessen our obligation to speak the *truth*? Did he reduce the seriousness of telling the truth? Certainly not—he increased it. He raised the standard. In the same way, when he forbade his followers to inflict injury in response to evil, did he cancel out the law of love—of loving your neighbor as yourself, of doing to others what you’d want done to you? Did he weaken that law? No, he amplified and perfected it.

If his followers were to sincerely obey his teaching—to meet evil with goodness and endure injury without retaliation—would it make them worse people? Would it lead to an *increase* in crime and injustice? Only a blasphemer would dare say so. We know the opposite is true.

In short, the doctrine of non-resistance, as we’ve drawn it from this passage, is not a contradiction of the law and the prophets. It is their true fulfillment—their righteousness brought to its highest glory. It harmonizes completely with what Jesus taught in verses 18 through 20. So, this objection—like the others—is silenced.

#### REASON FOR NOTICING ALL THESE EVASIONS.

I’ve taken the time to carefully examine the different interpretations of Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:38–41—those various attempts to soften their clear meaning or to dismiss them as support for the doctrine we’re considering. I haven’t done this because I think these interpretations are especially strong or credible in themselves, but because I’ve personally heard them all put forward—often confidently—by clergymen and respected Christians from various denominations who were trying to



resist the truth. What's especially striking is how inconsistent and contradictory these anti-non-resistance interpretations and objections are. And yet, I've heard them each presented with conviction—even by ministers of the same denomination—and repeatedly argued as though they offered serious challenges to the meaning of the passage. That's why it's important to expose and refute them: not to convince those already hardened in their opposition, but to help sincere and intelligent individuals who might otherwise be misled by the confident reasoning of religious leaders they've trusted for spiritual guidance.

When we set out to prove a doctrine, it isn't enough just to quote verses that *sound* appealing. We must also demonstrate that those passages can't reasonably be interpreted in any other way than the one we propose. To have shown that Matthew 5:38–41 undeniably supports this doctrine is a major accomplishment in itself. Once that foundation is secure, the rest of the case becomes much easier to build. So this is what I claim: I've established one solid, fundamental proof—based on the highest possible scriptural authority. If that proof cannot be refuted, if it must be accepted, if the passage cannot honestly be interpreted in any way other than what I've shown, then it's highly likely I'll find plenty of supporting evidence throughout the rest of the New Testament. With that foundation laid, I'll now continue by quoting another portion from the same chapter and sermon.

#### SECOND PROOF, MATT. 5: 43-48.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat and persecute you." (Matt. 5:43–44)

This teaching clearly follows the same spirit and meaning as the previous one. It is unmistakably clear, direct, and powerful. As for the origin of the saying, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy," we may not know exactly who first said it, but it had likely become a common belief by that time. Its logic and roots are closely related to the earlier phrase, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," and it gained much of its authority from the Mosaic laws concerning capital punishment and the treatment of Israel's national enemies.

Consider these passages from the Old Testament:

"If you hear someone in one of your cities - which the Lord your God has given you to dwell in - saying 'Certain corrupt men have gone out from among you and enticed the inhabitants of their city, saying: *Let us go and serve other gods, which you have not known*'; then you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently. And if it indeed true and certain that such an abomination was committed among you, you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying it, all that is in it and its livestock - with the edge of the sword. And you

shall gather all its plunder into the middle of the street and completely burn with fire the city and all its plunder, for the Lord your God." (Deut. 13:12–16)

"Of the cities of the nations the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. Completely destroy them—the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—as the Lord your God has commanded." (Deut. 20:16–17)

"Do not make a covenant with them or show them mercy." (Deut. 7:2)

And in the same spirit, David prays:

"Contend, Lord, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me. Take up shield and armor; arise and come to my aid... May they be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the Lord driving them away... May their path be dark and slippery, with the angel of the Lord pursuing them." (Psalm 35:1–8)

Jesus, while just as opposed to idolatry and wrongdoing, offers a dramatically different response to enemies and offenders. Instead of authorizing hatred and destruction, he says, "Love your enemies. Bless those who curse you. Do good to those who hate you. Pray for those who persecute you." This is a complete reversal of the old ethos of vengeance and retribution. Jesus includes in "enemies" not just national foes, but anyone who injures us—personally, socially, religiously, or otherwise. His teaching is absolutely incompatible with hatred, persecution, cruelty, war, or any kind of injury inflicted by one person, group, or nation upon another. A truly Christian individual could never intentionally harm another, no matter the offense. So what would a truly Christian family, community, or nation do? Could they act in any way other than with non-resistance? If they truly loved and blessed those who wronged them, what a transformative spectacle they would present! What a moral victory over evil they would achieve!

Isn't this exactly what Jesus is commanding? Could his words possibly mean anything less than what they plainly say? Can any professing Christian justify hanging someone, or burning them alive, or torturing them, or using violence or war—and still claim to be practicing Jesus' command to love and bless their enemies? Does the man who kills his enemy truly love him? Can anyone claim to follow Christ while actively injuring those who have wronged them?

But Jesus continues:

"That you may be children of your Father in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others?

Do not even the pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your Father in heaven is perfect.” (Matt. 5:45–48)

God loves even his enemies—he blesses those who curse him, and he does good to those who despise him. If this weren’t so, the sun wouldn’t shine on the wicked, nor would the rain fall for the unjust. Salvation itself would not have been offered to sinners. So if we are to be God’s children, we must reflect his character. We must love even the undeserving, just as he does. Do not settle for merely loving those who love you. Go further. Love, forgive, and seek to bless even those who wrong you. That is what lifts you above the moral level of the world. That is what separates a disciple of Christ from the common crowd.

What could be clearer? What teaching could be more pure, more sublime, or more morally beautiful? This is the essence of Christian non-resistance—a perfect love that expresses itself in patient forbearance and absolute goodwill. Non-resistance is not mere passivity; *it is love in action*. It is the fruit of a heart transformed by divine grace. But let us continue.

### THIRD PROOF - FORGIVENESS.

Jesus commands us to forgive others based on the same principle that he applies throughout his teachings on non-resistance and love. He says:

“Pray then like this:” ... “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” ... “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Matt. 6:9, 12, 14–15)

Later, Peter approaches Jesus and asks: “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus replies, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.” (Matt. 18:21–22) See also the parable that follows this one, at the end of the chapter.

Jesus continues this theme in other teachings:

“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your sins.” (Mark 11:25–26)

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.” (Luke 6:37)

The message in all these passages is that the person who has been wronged believes they have the right to punish the one who wronged them because a real offense has occurred. Jesus isn’t talking about petty jealousy, baseless resentment, or personal dislike. He assumes a genuine injury has taken place—something that,



according to common law or *natural justice*, would justify a matching punishment, like “an eye for an eye.” He doesn’t excuse the *wrong*, deny that the offender deserves punishment, or ask us to pretend that the wrongdoing was *right*. Instead, he speaks directly to the person who has been wronged—the one who could rightfully bring a complaint—and commands them to forgive the offender. That means: don’t insist on punishment. Don’t demand justice in the form of suffering or harm for the wrongdoer. Instead, view them with pity, even if they remain threatening. Don’t *harm* them for what they’ve done. That is what Jesus calls *human forgiveness*, and he requires it of all his followers. To strengthen this command, he says that our heavenly Father will forgive us only if we forgive others. But if we don’t forgive those who’ve wronged us, God won’t forgive us either. He reminds us that we’ve all sinned against God, and that by strict justice, we too deserve punishment. Our only hope is in *God’s GRACE*, not *our GOODNESS*. We constantly ask God to bless us despite our faults. Therefore, Jesus tells us to forgive others in the same way we ask God to forgive us. He asks us to treat others the way we want God to treat us. He tells us not to punish those who wrong *us*, but to keep doing good to them—just as we hope God will continue to be patient and kind to us, despite our sins. And if we sincerely forgive others while praying for our own forgiveness, this proves we are genuine. It prepares our hearts to receive God’s mercy. Then God will accept us and draw near to us, because nothing in our hearts will block his love and mercy. But if we ask God for forgiveness while holding grudges and plotting revenge against others—if we want to be treated far better than we treat those who wrong us—we show that we are not sincere. We mock God with our prayers, and our own harshness becomes a wall that blocks his grace. God is a forgiving Father by nature, but he can’t extend his forgiveness to us if our hearts are full of bitterness. His spirit and ours are in conflict. We’re not worshipping him in spirit and truth. We have shut ourselves off from his presence—because we are unwilling to forgive, and therefore remain unforgiven. We cannot be at peace with God, or worship him rightly, or enjoy his goodness, so long as we insist on punishing those who wrong us. Only in the spirit of human forgiveness can we experience and enjoy divine forgiveness.

This is the teaching of Jesus. What a blessing it is to the brokenhearted, to the merciful, and to the humble! But how troubling it is to those with hard hearts, who take satisfaction in harsh punishment. Here the entire structure of true piety and religion is rooted in the principle of non-resistance. We can’t even pray with a spirit of revenge without insulting our forgiving Father and essentially asking him to treat us as harshly as we treat others. If we won’t forgive, but keep trying to punish those who wrong us—and still dare to pray that God forgive us *as we forgive others*—we are only calling on God to be just as severe and punitive with us as we are with our fellow humans. What a fearful thought! Yet who can deny it?

Jesus has made this point powerfully clear—like a burning coal placed directly on our conscience. Can anyone really escape the conclusion that his teachings on forgiveness lead us to? I don't believe so. And yet, millions of professing Christians support, assist, and defend war, the death penalty, and all kinds of punitive justice. Still, they continue to pray each day that God forgive them *as they forgive others!!*

The prophet Isaiah's words in chapter 58 seem directly relevant to such people:

"Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion and to the descendants of Jacob their sins. For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them." (Isaiah 58:1–2)

Read the rest of the chapter. This kind of lip-service devotion—drawing near to God outwardly while the heart is far from him—is sadly common. And nowhere is it more evident than in our desire to punish those who offend us, even as we humbly ask God to forgive our own offenses.

#### FURTHER IMPORTANT PROOFS.

Another important group of supporting scriptures, which confirm those already mentioned, includes the following:

"My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place." (John 18:36)

Compare this with Matthew 10:16:

"Look, I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. So be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves."

Also compare with Luke 22:24–26:

"A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be the greatest. Jesus said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles rule over them, and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who leads like the one who serves.'"

In the same category, we can include the following passage:

"As they went into a Samaritan village to prepare for Jesus' arrival, the people there did not welcome him because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, '*Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them, like Elijah did?*' But Jesus turned and rebuked them. He

said, ‘You don’t know what spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy people’s lives, but to save them.’” (Luke 9:52–56)

“Then they came and arrested Jesus. One of Jesus’ companions drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he would immediately send more than twelve legions of angels?’” (Matthew 26:50–53)

Also see John 8:3–11, the story of the woman caught in adultery and brought before Jesus to see if he would sentence her to be stoned, as required by the law of Moses. After her accusers backed away from carrying out the punishment, Jesus said to her,

“Then neither do I condemn you (i.e., to death). Go now and sin no more.”

These and similar passages serve as powerful, practical illustrations of Jesus’ explicit teachings. His kingdom is not of this world, and therefore it excludes all military or violent defense. His followers are sent out unarmed—like sheep among wolves. They are to be both wise and harmless. Everything in his kingdom must operate on the principle of non-resistance.

There should be no political competition for power, no arrogant superiority, no worldly craving for control. Instead, those who occupy the highest positions must prove themselves worthy by willingly taking the lowest place, leading through the power of *service* rather than coercion. Governance must shed its worldly symbols, its cunning strategies, and its right to punish. True leadership should rest in moral integrity—uncelebrated, unprivileged, and devoid of any claim to special treatment. That is Christian government.

Jesus and his disciples might be treated badly, as they were by the Samaritans, but they must never retaliate with harm—not even if they had the power to call down fire from heaven. Such a spirit has no place in his kingdom, because the Son of Man did not come to destroy people’s lives, but to save them.

Therefore, the principle of not responding to evil with evil must be the guiding rule for Jesus’ followers, for all time. They must never destroy life, but always seek to save it. Even when Jesus, the *Holy One*, was being betrayed and arrested, he would not allow Peter to defend him with a sword. Why? Because “all who draw the sword will die by the sword.” “The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” Evil cannot be overcome by evil.

How can anyone look at such clear, powerful, consistent, and undeniable evidence of the biblical truth of Christian non-resistance without feeling their entire soul deeply moved with conviction? And yet, the tide of resistance and violence continues to rise and flow on.

## APOSTOLIC TESTIMONIES.

The Apostles, gradually freed from their early beliefs and upbringing that expected a political and military kingdom, gave up all physical weapons. As they became filled with divine inspiration, they echoed the non-resistance teachings of their Master:

"Do not conform to the ways of this world. Instead, be transformed by renewing your minds, so you can recognize what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God."

"Bless those who persecute you; bless them, and do not curse."

"Repay no one evil for evil."

"Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, '*Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.*' To the contrary, '*if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.*' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

(Romans 12:2, 14, 17, 19–21)

"Is any of you bold enough to take another believer to court before the unrighteous, instead of before the saints?"

"Actually, it's already a defeat for you that you take each other to court. Why not rather accept being wronged? Why not let yourselves be cheated?"

(1 Corinthians 6:1,7)

"For though we live in the world, we do not fight the way the world does. The weapons we use in our warfare are not physical, but they have divine power to break down strongholds, destroy arguments, and every proud obstacle that sets itself up against knowing God. We take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ."

(2 Corinthians 10:3–5)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against these things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ have nailed their sinful nature to the cross, with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."

(Galatians 5:22–25)

"Be angry, but do not sin. Don't let the sun go down while you're still angry."

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, shouting, and slander, along with every form of malice."

(Ephesians 4:26, 31)

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience."

(Colossians 3:12)

“Make sure that no one repays evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good for each other and for everyone.” (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and is now seated at the right hand of God’s throne. Think about him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you won’t grow weary and lose heart.”

“Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.”  
(Hebrews 12:1–3,14)

“My dear brothers and sisters, be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.

Because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”  
(James 1:19–20)

“Where do wars and fights among you come from? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you?”

“Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”  
(James 4:1,7)

“It is commendable if someone endures pain while suffering unjustly because of their conscience toward God. But what credit is there if you are beaten for doing wrong and endure it? However, if you suffer for doing good and endure it, this is pleasing to God. To this you were called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they insulted him, he didn’t retaliate. When he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.”  
(1 Peter 2:19–23)

“Who is going to harm you if you’re eager to do good? But even if you suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Don’t be afraid of what they fear; don’t be intimidated.”

“For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous.”  
(1 Peter 3:13–14,17–18; See also 4:13–19)

“Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.”

"But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes."

(1 John 2:6,11)

"Whoever doesn't love his brother remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him."

(1 John 3:14–15)

"No one has ever seen God. But if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is made complete in us."

"If someone says, '*I love God,*' but hates his brother, he is a liar. For whoever doesn't love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen."

(1 John 4:12,20)

### GENERAL VIEW OF THE EVIDENCE.

Is it possible to read these quotations without being irresistibly convinced of how perfectly they align with the teachings of the Savior on this great subject? Can we really doubt that they all came from the same divine source?

Now, what was the *example* set by Jesus? What did the Apostles *do* after Christ's resurrection, once they were fully filled with power and grace from above? Did they ever kill anyone? Did they ever even threaten to do so? Did they ever use a deadly weapon? Did they ever serve in the army or navy of any nation, state, or leader? Did they ever seek or accept any legislative, judicial, or executive role under the governments of their time? Did they ever report an offender or criminal to the authorities to have them punished? Did they ever start a lawsuit to get justice for themselves? Did they ever ask civil or military authorities to protect them with force when they were in danger? Or did they ever advise anyone else to do any of these things? Did they ever, by word or action, express trust in political, military, or penal power for their personal protection or for spreading Christianity? My confident answer is NO.

But let each person be fully convinced in their own mind. Let the New Testament be thoroughly examined with these questions in mind. If I am correct—and I believe I am—then those who oppose non-resistance must admit the truth. If scripture consistently teaches and demonstrates non-resistance in both words and actions, then the matter is settled beyond argument. I know some people desperately try to object, pointing to texts like the one about Jesus using a *whip of cords*, or the time he told his disciples to *buy swords*, or Paul's appeal to Caesar, or when he warned the captain about a plot to kill him, or Romans chapter 13. But none of these, individually or combined, can support their argument—as I will show in the next chapter. On the other hand, we can point to many examples—a whole way of



life—that align with the doctrine of non-resistance. And we can also show that this teaching was widely practiced by *early Christians* for quite some time after the apostolic age.

Look at Jesus during his temptation. He was offered all the kingdoms of the world—but on what condition? That he would bow down and worship the Tempter. Isn't this basically the same condition under which his followers have always been offered political power? There's a spirit that drives worldly government. It is the spirit of destruction—the *angel of injury*—the old serpent of violence. This is the real power behind every earthly throne, the last resort, the ultimate means on which all worldly authority relies. Anyone who believes government can exist without this is usually called a fool. Therefore, openly acknowledging this violent spirit is still the condition for taking up political power. Anyone who wants to rule must first honor this spirit of violence—must swear to support that power through force and punishment. Jesus refused. He chose the suffering and shame of the cross instead of the glory and fame of ruling the world under those terms. It didn't matter to him if the whole world took his name and verbally called him "Lord" while in their hearts and actions they served evil. He refused to be a king of nations if he couldn't reign over hearts and consciences. He refused to do evil so that good might come. His kingdom was not of this world—it was built on righteousness and peace. So he turned down the offer of worldly power and left it in the hands of those who would soon spill his non-resistant blood. That's also why, when he saw the people were determined to make him king, he withdrew. That's why he refused to act as a "judge and divider" among them. That's why, when he was the only one who could rightfully condemn the adulterous woman, he didn't pronounce a death sentence or lift a stone. When a violent crowd, led by his betrayer, came to arrest him while he prayed in Gethsemane, he didn't fight back. Instead, he rebuked his disciple for using a sword, healed the man who had been wounded, and taught them that anyone who lives by the sword will die by the sword. So he allowed himself to be taken away "like a sheep before the shearers" and "like a lamb to the slaughter." They stripped him of his clothes, dressed him in a fake royal robe, crowned him with thorns, beat him, spat on him, sentenced him—without cause—to death, nailed him to a cross between two criminals, tortured him as he died, and followed him to the end with pure hatred. Yet not once did he speak a threat, a curse, or a bitter word. With gentle dignity and sorrow, he endured everything. And at the moment when he could have called on legions of angels to rescue him and destroy his enemies, he instead prayed this final victorious prayer: "*Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing.*" Heaven heard that prayer in silence. Then came his final breath—not as a judgment on a violent world, but as the solemn "Amen" of the New Covenant—the sign of his complete victory over hate, sin, and death.

## THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS.

If we step into the world of the evangelists and apostles of the Crucified, and ask how they lived and died, what answer will we find?

“God has put us apostles on display at the very end, like people sentenced to death; we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to people.”

“We are hungry and thirsty, poorly clothed, beaten, and homeless.”

“When we are insulted, we bless; when persecuted, we endure it; when slandered, we respond kindly. We have become like the scum of the earth, the garbage of the world.”

Stephen was stoned to death while praying for the Savior to receive his spirit, and with a holy plea on his lips: *“Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”* James was killed by the sword. Peter was crucified. Paul was beheaded. And countless other martyrs sealed their testimony with their blood. But during that time, though they suffered everything for the sake of the cross, they harmed *no one*. Always courageous in defending the truth, yet meek, patient, and non-resistant, they lived out their Christian principles in a truly remarkable way.

We never see them seeking positions of power. Never do they distinguish themselves in military ranks. Never do they flatter or court the favor of powerful people to gain recognition or political influence. They are never found stirring up rebellions, riots, uprisings, or revolts. They never rely on weapons to protect themselves, not even when surrounded by brutal and violent societies. They never curse, insult, or verbally attack even their persecutors. Such were the apostles and the early Christians. They had learned directly from Jesus, and for the first two centuries, non-resistance was the standard, practical belief of the church.

Justin Martyr, writing in the early second century, declared that the devil was the author of all war. Tertullian condemned the use of weapons, asking: *“Should someone who isn’t even supposed to avenge his own wrongs be responsible for putting others in chains, prison, torture, or death?”* Lactantius wrote, *“It can never be right for a righteous person to go to war, because his only battle is to live righteously.”* Clarkson explains, “From Athenagoras and other early Christian writers, we learn that Christians of that time did not strike back when struck. They followed their principles so strictly that they even refused to take legal action against those who wronged them.” The language of these early believers was clear and consistent. One said, “It is not lawful for a Christian to carry weapons.” Another said, “Because I am a Christian, I have left my profession as a soldier.” A third declared, “I am a Christian, and therefore I cannot fight.” A fourth, Maximilian, said, “I cannot fight. If I must die, I am not a soldier of this world, but a soldier of God.” And for his loyalty, he was executed by the military authorities.



## TESTIMONY OF CELSUS AND GIBBON.

Celsus, a pagan philosopher, wrote a detailed work against the Christians around the middle of the second century. One of his serious accusations was this: "You will not bear arms in service of the empire when your help is needed, and if all nations followed this principle, the empire would be overrun by barbarians."

Gibbon, the famous English historian of the declining Roman Empire and a skeptic about Christianity, incidentally confirms that the early Christians were clearly non-resistant. He wrote, "The defense of our persons and property they knew not how to reconcile with the patient doctrine, that enjoined an unlimited forgiveness of past injuries, and commanded them to invite fresh insults. Their simplicity was offended by the use of oaths, by the pomp of magistracy, and by the active contention of public life; nor could their humane ignorance be convinced that it was lawful, on any occasion, to shed the blood of their fellow creatures, either by the sword of justice or that of war, even though their criminal and hostile attempts should threaten the whole community... They felt and confessed that such institutions (life-taking, etc.) might be necessary for the present system of the world, and they cheerfully submitted to the authority of their pagan governors. But while they inculcated the maxims of passive obedience, they refused to take any active part in the civil administration, or military defense, of the empire." (Chapter 15, Part IV)

"The humble Christians were sent into the world as sheep among wolves, and since they were not permitted to employ force, even in the defense of their religion. They deemed that they should be still more criminal if they were tempted to shed the-blood of their fellow creatures in disputing the vain privileges or the sordid possessions of this transitory life. Faithful to the doctrine of the apostle, who in the reign of Nero had preached the duty of unconditional submission, the Christians of the first three centuries preserved their conscience pure and innocent of the guilt of secret conspiracy or open rebellion. While they experienced the rigor of persecution, they were never provoked either to meet their tyrants in the field, or indignantly to withdraw themselves into some remote and sequestered corner of the globe." (Chapter 20, Part I)

Can there be any doubt that Jesus Christ, his apostles, and the early Christians held, taught, and lived out the doctrine I am arguing for? Isn't the scriptural evidence for its truth abundant, clear, undeniable, and compelling? It seems to me that it is. I therefore recommend what has been shared here for the serious consideration of all honest minds, especially those whose respect for, and commitment to the scriptures give their judgment weight in deciding such a question.

## CHAPTER III.

### SCRIPTURAL OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

Objection 1 – You throw away the Old Testament – Voice of the New Testament – Voice of the Old Testament. Objection 2 – The scourge of small cords. Objection 3 – The two swords. Objection 4 – The death of Ananias and Sapphira. Objection 5 – Human government – Romans chapter 13 – How the apostles viewed the then existing governments – Submission to, not participation in governments enjoined on Christians – In what sense the powers that be are ordained of God – Pharaoh God’s “minister” – Also the monarch of Assyria – Also Nebuchadnezzar – The Roman government – Respects wherein government is ordained of God – Paul’s conduct in relation to government – Conclusion.

I dedicate this chapter to addressing objections based on scripture. Our doctrine is clearly supported by an abundance of strong and convincing evidence from the New Testament. It brings a level of conviction to many people—even those who are not ready for the significant changes in practice that the doctrine demands, or even for fully agreeing with the doctrine itself. As a result, they retreat behind what seem to be strong scriptural objections, often raised by more committed critics. These critics insist that such objections must be thoroughly answered. And it is only fair that they should be.

#### OBJECTION I. - YOU THROW AWAY THE OLD TESTAMENT.

"You only quote from the New Testament to support the doctrine of non-resistance. But the Old Testament clearly contradicts it. It provides plenty of commands and examples that justify war, the death penalty, and various forms of punishment for criminals. Isn't the whole Bible the word of God? Are you rejecting and disregarding the Old Testament? If your doctrine truly came from God, shouldn't it be supported by both the Old and New Testaments?"

**ANSWER.** It's true that I have quoted only from the New Testament scriptures to support the doctrine of Christian non-resistance. I also acknowledge that, apart from a few minor exceptions, the Old Testament stands clearly opposed to it—at least when considered without the lens of the Christian revelation. I accept the whole Bible, when properly understood and interpreted, as the word of God in a *general sense*. However, I do not consider the Old Testament to be as clear, complete, or authoritative as the New Testament when it comes to questions of doctrine and moral duty. Nor do I believe it should serve as the rule of faith and practice for Christians. Rather, it should be held in reverence as the prophecy and preparation for the New Testament—a shadow of better things to come. If I can demonstrate that this is indeed the proper role and function of the Old Testament, then I will have answered the objection at hand. More than that, I will have shown that I give proper

respect to both Testaments, while those who insist on equal authority for the Old Testament actually *undermine* the integrity of both. Let's settle this issue. Let the scriptures of the two Testaments speak for themselves. What they say about one another should settle the matter.

#### VOICE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Let's begin with the New Testament: "God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in the past to our ancestors through the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us through his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he also made the universe." — Hebrews 1:1–2

"Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest we confess. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself."

"Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, bearing witness to what would be spoken later. But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house..." — Hebrews 3:1–3, 5–6

"Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? For when the priesthood is changed, the law must also be changed."

"The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God."

"Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant."  
—Hebrews 7:11–12, 18–19, 22

"But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises. If there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another."

"'The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors...'"

"'This is the covenant I will establish... I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.'"

“By calling this covenant ‘new,’ he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.” — Hebrews 8:6-7, 8-12, 10, 13 (See also Hebrews 10:1-2.)

“Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come.”

“Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.” — Galatians 3:19, 23-25

“In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets.” — Ephesians 3:4-5

“Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory... will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!”

“Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.” — 2 Corinthians 3:5-8, 12-15

“But God has helped me to this very day; so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen—that the Messiah would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would bring the message of light to his own people and to the Gentiles.” — Acts 26:22-23

“We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you...”

“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality.” — Acts 15:24, 29

“Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses.” — Acts 13:39

“For Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you.’”

“Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days.” — Acts 3:22, 24

“Do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?” — John 5:45–47

“We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth.” — John 1:45

“This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.” — Luke 24:44

“The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it.” — Luke 16:16

“I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” — Luke 7:28

“There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light... He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.”

“John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, ‘*This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’*’ ”

“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.” — John 1:6–8, 15, 17–18

“John replied, ‘*A person can receive only what is given them from heaven.*’ ”

“He must become greater; I must become less. The one who comes from above is above all.”

“For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.” — John 3:27, 30–31, 34

This is the testimony of the New Testament scriptures. The objector claims to hold these scriptures to be at least *equally* as authoritative as those of the Old Testament, and to accept the entire Bible as the word of God. Now, does he truly believe what is stated in the passages just cited? Does he believe that "Christ was considered worthy of more glory than Moses;" that Moses was "a servant, but Christ is a Son over his own household;" that "perfection did not come through the Levitical priesthood;" that Christ is the great "High Priest in the order of Melchizedek;" that "since the priesthood has changed, there must also be a change in the law;" that the old law "made nothing perfect;" that Jesus was made the guarantor of a better covenant – the mediator of a better agreement; that the old covenant was flawed, became outdated, and was ready to "disappear;" that the law was simply a "schoolmaster" to lead humanity to Christ; that the New Testament is not based on "the letter that kills, but on the Spirit that gives life;" that the law was a "ministry of death," whose "glory was destined to fade away;" that the Christian era "surpasses it in glory;" that the Mosaic era was to be "abolished;" that a veil remains over the hearts of certain types of Jewish-minded readers when reading the Old Testament, a veil that "is removed in Christ;" that Moses and the prophets wrote about Christ; that Moses referred to him when he predicted the coming of a prophet, and the people must "LISTEN TO HIM IN EVERYTHING HE SAYS;" that "the law and the prophets lasted until John the Baptist," and then the kingdom of God began to be preached; that John was the greatest of the prophets born before, and yet he is less than the least in the kingdom of the gospel; that Christ came before and ranked above John – that he came from heaven and is above all – that he was filled with the Spirit without measure – and is the true "light of the world"? If he believes all of this, what happens to his objection? If he does not believe it, what happens to the New Testament?

#### VOICE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

And what does the Old Testament say? Does it contradict the testimony of the New? Does it present itself as the perfect and final revelation from God regarding divine truth, human duty, and destiny? Does it claim a higher mission or more lasting authority than what the New Testament attributes to it? Doesn't Moses predict Christ and command that he be listened to in *everything*? Don't the prophets foretell the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of a new covenant, greater than the one given at Sinai? Don't all the types and symbols of the old covenant imply the coming of a new and more glorious one?

Is there any need for me to quote verses from the Old Testament to prove this? No, the objector won't require that. He'll spare me the effort, because he has to admit the obvious truth. To deny it would be to question the divine inspiration of both Testaments—and to do exactly what he strongly opposes: discredit the entire Bible. If, then, the New Testament claims to supersede the Old, and the Old, through



prophecy, symbolism, and foreshadowing, predicts the coming of a more glorious covenant—that is, the New—then the issue is settled once and for all. ► *The New Testament takes precedence over the Old in all matters of divine truth and human duty.*

In saying this, I am simply affirming what both Testaments clearly declare about themselves and each other. To deny it is effectively to question the truth of both. To say the opposite is to accuse both of falsehood. Therefore, instead of discarding the Old Testament, I accept its testimony and treat it with proper respect. By looking to the New Testament and accepting it as my guide for faith and practice, I am actually honoring the teachings of the *Old*. On the other hand, those who turn back from the perfection of the New to the imperfection of the Old—from the reality to the shadow, from sunlight to lamplight—in order to define their Christian duty, trample on both Testaments and undermine the authority of the entire Bible. They believe in neither; they obey neither.

From this perspective, the Old Testament, being essentially a prophecy and foreshadowing of the New, is not *opposed* to non-resistance—even though, for a time, some of its specific commands and examples were contrary to that principle. As a whole, the Old Testament supports Christ and the supreme authority of his teachings, *including* non-resistance. It supports the New Testament in all its distinct features, and affirms the superiority of the glorious gospel. Who can deny this?

Therefore, when professing Christians quote the Old Testament's commands and examples as if they still apply under the New Covenant, it is not only a serious misrepresentation but also a kind of well-intentioned deception—and it should not be tolerated. A person cannot be a true friend to the Old Testament if they pit it in forceful opposition to the New. That person is an enemy of both.

Nor is *that* person the friend of Moses who claims that Moses is *equal* to Jesus Christ. That's no better than trying to make a loyal messenger into a rival of the king whose coming he was sent to announce and prepare for. And yet, there have always been people who have elevated Moses above Jesus. But Moses foretold and made preparations for the arrival of a Prophet whom God would raise up at the appointed time. That Prophet was Christ. And what did Moses command about how Christ should be received? "You must listen to him in everything he says to you."

Well, that promised one came into the world and spoke as no one had ever spoken before. But he corrected some of Moses' teachings, adjusted others, and completely overturned several of them. Moses, because of the people's hardness of heart, had allowed them to divorce their wives for various reasons. But Jesus firmly forbade this, allowing only one exception—sexual immorality. Moses permitted sacred and legal oaths, and required strict fulfillment of all vows. But Jesus said plainly, "Do not take an oath at all." Moses said, "A life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." But Jesus said, "Do not resist an evil person."

This very superiority of Jesus over Moses offended the Jews. “Who do you think you are?” they said mockingly. “We know that God spoke to Moses. As for this man, we don’t even know where he came from.” But Jesus said, “If you had believed Moses, you would have believed me—for he wrote about me.” And yet Jesus became a stumbling block to them—a rock that caused offense. They refused to listen to him in everything, even though Moses had clearly commanded them to do so.

This same kind of stumbling still happens today among people who call themselves Christians. When the straightforward, non-resistant teachings of Jesus are brought to their attention and shown to be essential requirements of the gospel, they see them as hard to accept. The old law of retaliation is so appealing, and using harm to resist harm seems so convenient, that even though they can’t deny the clear non-resistant meaning of Jesus’ words, they retreat to the authority of Moses and deny that Jesus ever overruled his teachings. They claim not to understand what Jesus really meant—but they’re somehow sure that he kept *war*, *capital punishment*, *criminal penalties*, and *self-defense* just as Moses had prescribed them. Even though Jesus explicitly refers to Moses’ teaching—“life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth”—and directly revokes it, they still cling to it. And they do this under the guise of deep reverence for God’s word—the whole Bible—accusing non-resistants of rejecting Moses and the Old Testament just because they follow Jesus and the New Covenant—as the Old Testament itself foretold they should. But that accusation turns back on them. They are the ones who truly reject Moses and the Old Testament, because if they truly believed Moses and the prophets, they would also believe in Jesus and the New Testament as more excellent, more glorious, and more authoritative than those that came before. But as it stands, they accept neither the Old nor the New Testaments as the *Word of God* in the way that each, individually and together, claim to be.

Is it really believable that if Moses could be summoned from the afterlife, he would praise them for sticking to his warlike and punitive laws, while ignoring Christ’s commands of non-resistance? Would he thank them for overriding and nullifying Jesus’ teachings by enforcing his own? Would he not rebuke them for their unbelief and rebellion? Wouldn’t he, like Elijah, say, “He who comes after me is greater than I am, and I am not worthy to carry his shoes”? “He must increase, and I must decrease. He who is from the earth belongs to the earth; he who comes from heaven is above all.” “Listen to him in *everything*.”

In light of all this, I consider the objection under discussion to be fully answered.

## OBJECTION II. - THE SCOURGE OF SMALL CORDS.

“Jesus went up to Jerusalem and found people in the temple selling oxen, sheep, and doves, along with money changers sitting at their tables. After making a whip from small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, along with the sheep and oxen. He poured out the changers' money and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves, he said, ‘*Take these things out of here! Don't make my Father's house a place of business.*’ His disciples then remembered the scripture: ‘*My devotion to your Temple burns in me like fire.*’” (John 2:13–17) Doesn't this action of Jesus directly contradict your teaching on non-resistance?

**ANSWER.** Whether Jesus' actions in this case contradict the principle of non-resistance depends largely on the specific facts of what actually happened. Did Jesus harm or threaten to harm anyone he drove out of the temple? Did he damage anyone's health or well-being? Did he destroy property out of anger or recklessness? Did he do anything that caused injury—physical, emotional, or financial—to anyone involved? If he did any of those things, then yes, his actions would conflict with how I define Christian non-resistance. But if he didn't, then what he did can be perfectly consistent with that doctrine.

It's clear that he was filled with a passionate zeal for the sanctity of the temple. It's also clear that by extraordinary means, he caused a group of people—who were using the temple for commerce—to leave, taking their animals and belongings with them. Everyone agrees those people had no legitimate right to occupy the temple for such purposes, and ideally, they should have left voluntarily when Jesus confronted them. The real question is this: Did Jesus actually harm anyone's person, property, or moral standing in driving them out? If we assume he physically struck people with the whip, or violently flipped over tables full of coins—scattering money everywhere—then yes, I would have to admit that some level of injury or harm was inflicted. But I ask: where is the proof that he struck even a single person with the whip? Where is the evidence that he acted in a chaotic or undignified way while overturning the tables? What we do know is that he strongly and authoritatively commanded the vendors to remove their goods from the temple. He likely helped gather their money into containers and assisted in clearing the setups they had made for their transactions. Yes, he was zealous and resolute—but was he violent, out of control, or punitive? Are we to imagine Jesus charging through the temple like an angry mob leader—wildly swinging the whip, smashing tables, shoving people, tearing down furniture, and injuring anyone in his path? Some people seem to picture this kind of chaotic scene and then conclude that Jesus must have wounded people with the whip, destroyed or scattered their property, or caused them material loss. But I have just as much right to form a mental picture of the event—one that aligns with the consistent character and principles of Jesus as we know them. So I *imagine* it differently.

When Jesus entered the temple and saw it crowded with a mix of worshippers—some sincere, some going through the motions—and many others using religion as a cover for greed, selling animals and exchanging money, all this happening right next to sacred worship, with animal noises, coin clinking, and loud shouting blending with prayers and hymns—his spirit was filled with sorrow and righteous indignation. A holy fire was kindled in his heart to speak out against and end the sacrilege. He picked up some rushes or thin cords lying nearby—probably the kind used to tie up the animals—and wove them into a small whip, more symbolic than dangerous. Holding up this whip as a visible sign of divine condemnation, he began to rebuke the crowd for corrupting the worship of God with noisy business transactions. As his rebuke intensified, he spoke with divine authority and commanded that the temple be cleared immediately. The crowd, taken aback by the truth, justice, and unwavering force of his moral authority, withdrew from him in awe. His words carried such weight that they almost instinctively obeyed his orders. Soon, they were actively involved in clearing out the area. Jesus, still holding the symbolic whip—not using it to strike, but as a sign of judgment—followed the retreating crowd, urging them and their animals out. He likely helped dismantle the money tables and gathered the coins without damaging them, all while passionately continuing his warnings and rebukes.

I believe that throughout this entire event, spiritual and moral force—not physical violence—was the primary influence. Jesus used minimal physical force, and even *that* was non-injurious. He acted with the full authority, dignity, and divine mission of the Son of God. There was nothing in his behavior resembling a rioter, a fanatic, or a law enforcement officer. I believe Jesus harmed no one—not physically, emotionally, or materially. Rather, he did good to everyone involved by restoring holiness to the temple.

There is no definitive evidence—no eyewitness detail—that tells us whether he physically struck anyone or caused actual damage. We must form our conclusions based on the nature of the event and what we know of Jesus’ consistent character. And everything points toward non-resistance. It’s unreasonable and highly unlikely that Jesus physically drove out such a large crowd by beating them with a whip. But I do believe he struck their consciences—that his *rebuke* was a scourge to their minds, which his handmade whip symbolized. That kind of moral confrontation is entirely consistent with the non-resistance I teach. So I insist: it wasn’t mob force, military action, political coercion, or brute strength that cleansed the temple—it was divine moral power. Therefore, I shift the burden back to the objector. Let him produce evidence—beyond assumptions and speculation—that Jesus struck even one person with the whip or harmed anyone. If such proof exists, I will acknowledge the weight of the objection. Until then, I consider it fully answered.

### OBJECTION III. - THE TWO SWORDS.

According to Luke chapter 22, Jesus told his disciples to get swords: “If you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one.” Since swords can only be used as weapons for war or self-defense, how can this be reconciled with your teaching of non-resistance?

**ANSWER.** There is actually one other possible use for the sword besides war or self-defense. It might be used on a special occasion as a powerful symbol of harmful resistance, intended to strongly emphasize the teaching of non-resistance. I will try to show that this is exactly how Jesus meant the sword to be used in this case.

Jesus gave the instruction to buy swords just before his betrayal at the Passover, right before he was taken in the Garden of Gethsemane. When he said this, his disciples immediately responded, “Lord, look, here are two swords.” And Jesus replied, “Enough of this.” (Luke 22:38)

How could two swords be enough to arm twelve men for fighting or self-defense? This alone shows that Jesus did not intend for swords to be used in a literal, defensive way. He had a higher, more spiritual purpose.

When Judas came to betray Jesus with a kiss and the crowd came to arrest him, the disciples asked, “Lord, shall we fight with the sword?” One of them actually struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his right ear (Luke 22:49-50). Matthew’s account (26:52) tells us what Jesus did next: “Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.” Then Jesus healed the man’s ear and allowed himself to be taken by his enemies without fighting back.

So, the event shows that Jesus had the swords brought not to encourage fighting, but rather to clearly, finally, and forever forbid their use—even in self-defense by innocent people. After this, the apostles and the early Christians consciously avoided using swords altogether. These three facts prove my point:

1. Two swords were considered enough by Jesus.
2. The moment a sword was used in defense of Jesus, he stopped it, healed the injury, and gave the clear command to put the sword away, warning that those who live by the sword will die by it.
3. The apostles and early Christians obeyed this command and never again used swords or deadly weapons.

Therefore, this objection actually ends up strongly supporting the teaching of non-resistance and should be understood that way.

#### OBJECTION IV. - DEATH OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

The sudden death of Ananias and his wife Sapphira, who deceived the apostles by secretly holding back part of their estate while pretending to donate the entire amount to the church, seems to be, in effect, a case of capital punishment. How can this be reconciled with your doctrine of non-resistance?

**ANSWER.** The deaths of Ananias and Sapphira are not described as acts carried out by the apostles, nor are they shown to have been caused or brought about by them in any way. According to the biblical account, their deaths were a direct act of God, with no curse, denunciation, or human agency involved. This becomes clearer when we look at the actual passage:

*“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a piece of property, and kept back part of the money, with his wife’s knowledge, and brought a portion of it and laid it at the apostles’ feet. But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds from the land? Before it was sold, was it not yours? And after it was sold, was it not still under your control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.’ When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died.”*

*“About three hours later his wife came in, unaware of what had happened. Peter asked her, ‘How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well.’ Immediately she fell down at his feet and died.” (Acts 5:1–5, 7–10)*

Is there any suggestion in this account that Peter or any of the apostles took judicial authority over these people? Did they exercise any kind of human or divine power over their lives? Did they in any way cause, bring about, pray for, or wish for their deaths? Certainly not. Therefore, this incident does not provide a valid basis for the objection. I dismiss it accordingly.



## OBJECTION V. - HUMAN GOVERNMENT - ROMANS 13, ETC.

Human government is recognized in the New Testament as an institution ordained by God for the good of humanity. Rulers are described as a terror not to good works, but to evil ones—servants of God and agents of justice, “executing wrath on those who do evil,” who do not carry the sword without purpose. Christians are commanded to pay tribute, taxes, and give honor to these rulers, “not only because of possible *punishment*, but also as a matter of *conscience*.” Paul appealed to his Roman citizenship to gain an honorable release from prison and, on another occasion, to avoid being scourged. He sought military protection to save his life from a conspiracy of forty men and appealed to Caesar to obtain justice in response to the accusations made by the Jews. (See Romans 13:1–7; Acts 16:37, 22:24–29, 23:17, 25:10–12; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13–14, and other passages.)

Given that human government, with all its military and penal powers, is said to be ordained by God for the good of mankind; that its rulers are called God's ministers, tasked with protecting the innocent and punishing the guilty; and that Christians are instructed to submit to it—then it logically follows that, instead of abstaining from participation in government due to war, capital punishment, and penal measures, Christians should actually take part in its responsibilities and be its strongest supporters—always working to make it as effective as possible in fulfilling its divine purpose. This, then, presents an insurmountable objection to your doctrine of non-resistance—especially as it relates to government, war, capital punishment, etc.

**ANSWER.** This is by far the most persuasive and appealing objection currently raised against Christian non-resistance. It misleads and confuses more sincere people than any other argument, and it is the most difficult to answer. Yet, I believe it is deeply flawed and ultimately invalid. I will attempt to show why.

Government is the foundation of social order. It is the directing and regulating authority that maintains proper relationships among individuals and with society as a whole. The thoughtful Christian must understand it in three distinct ways:

1. Government *per se* (*divine government*);
2. Government *de jure* (*human government as it ought to be*);
3. Government *de facto* (*human government as it is*).

Government *per se* is authority exercised to maintain and promote moral order. Moral order presupposes rational social beings. When such beings are morally ordered, they are right-minded and naturally bring the physical world into proper condition. Mind governs *matter*, and moral authority governs *mind*. Where moral order exists, all other forms of order follow. Where moral order is lacking, disorder

spreads to every area of life. Therefore, all social order ultimately depends on a supreme moral authority—government—which must, by nature, be *divine*. This kind of government originates only in God; it is inherent in Him and not in any created being. Wherever true government exists, it comes from God. This means that there is no such thing, strictly speaking, as truly autonomous human government. Humans are always subordinate to God and have no right to create or enforce laws that contradict *God's* law. If human beings did possess independent authority, they could rightfully abolish or override divine law—but they cannot. Therefore, any human law or system of government that directly contradicts God's law is morally null and void. On the other hand, any government aligned with God's law is *morally* binding on everyone. This leads us to the second concept:

Government *de jure* is government that exists *by moral right*. No one would deny that all human governments should conform to *divine* standards. If they did conform, they would no longer be *human* in spirit, but would become reflections or embodiments of the *divine*. But since the term “human government” *can* refer to a *human* expression of a well-regulated social organization, I'll continue using it, as long as my meaning is clear. Christian non-resistance does not oppose government *per se* or government *de jure*—in fact, it reveres *per se* and holds *de jure* as its ultimate goal. That is precisely why it requires followers of Christ to separate themselves from all governments that fundamentally conflict with the divine will, i.e., governments that are not *de jure* according to the law of God revealed through Jesus Christ. This brings us to the third kind:

Government *de facto* is what government is *in practice*. What has government ever been in fact, throughout history until now? Has it ever truly mirrored divine government? Has it ever been *de jure* in its core structure? Is the present government of the United States, with all its admirable claims and real accomplishments, fundamentally a Christian government? Who would dare say so?

What, then, was the nature of government in the apostolic era? It was the rule of Herod, Pilate, Nero, and the Roman Caesars—under whom injustice, oppression, and cruelty trampled on human rights, filled the earth with bloodshed, crucified the Son of God, and created multitudes of martyrs.

Now the critical question is: When Paul wrote Romans 13, was he referring to government *per se*, government *de jure*, or government *de facto*? If he was referring only to the *first* or *second*, then his words pose no contradiction to non-resistance, and the objection collapses. But if he was speaking about human governments and rulers as they existed under the Roman Empire, then we must explore further to clarify the issue. For now, I assume that Paul was speaking of the *de facto* governments and rulers under whom Christians then lived—because I see no reason to think otherwise.

## HOW THE APOSTLES VIEWED THE THEN EXISTING GOVERNMENTS.

Taking this position, we want to understand exactly how the Apostle Paul and the other apostles viewed the governing authorities of their time, and how they advised Christ's followers to feel and act in relation to them. If Christ and the apostles considered the Caesars and their subordinate kings, governors, and magistrates to be *consciously* guided and approved by God—as His intentional representatives in managing the governments of the time—if they truly believed that the governments of the world then in power were *ordained* by God in the same way that their own spiritual, religious, and moral authority was, then the objection we're considering is *unanswerable*. In that case, I would have to admit that Christians are obligated to share in the responsibilities of any government under which they live and to support its demands in all areas—whether those include war, capital punishment, persecution, idolatry, slavery, or anything else it may require. In such a case, these would be God's own laws and commands, to be obeyed absolutely in every respect, without exceptions or limitations. But did the apostles actually teach such a doctrine? If they did, why then did they and the early Christians make such a careful effort to remain separate from the governments of their time?

No, even the objector wouldn't argue for such an unqualified approval of human government by the apostles. He would reject such extreme conclusions. He would acknowledge the deep corruption, tyranny, and evil of the very governments that Paul refers to as "ordained by God." In fact, he would admit even more than I care to argue for—the appalling irreverence, injustice, and persecution carried out by the same rulers whom Paul describes as "God's ministers—avengers who carry out wrath on evildoers." The objector would not claim that governments like those of Herod, Pilate, and Nero were "ordained by God" in the same way the Church of Jesus Christ was. Nor would he argue that those bloodthirsty rulers and their agents were "ministers of God" in the conscious, approved sense that the apostles were. He knows full well that Paul never intended his words to be understood in that way. So here lies the subtle but dangerous flaw in the objection: the terms and phrases are being misinterpreted. There is a certain sense in which it is true to say, "there is no power but of God," in which "the powers that be are ordained by God," in which "rulers," even the worst among them, "are not a terror to good works, but to evil," and in which they are "ministers of God for good" to the righteous and "avengers who bring wrath" upon wrongdoers. But what exactly is that sense? Let us explore the issue further.

## SUBMISSION TO, NOT PARTICIPATION IN, GOVERNMENT ENJOINED ON CHRISTIANS.

It is clear that throughout the New Testament, Christians are consistently instructed to show respect and submission to human governments, kings, rulers, and magistrates. They are forbidden to resist "the powers that be" or their laws

through any form of reckless disobedience, rebellion, sedition, or violence of any kind. They are commanded to obey these authorities in all matters that do not require them to disobey God. And when obedience to God brings them into *conflict* with the government, they are to do their duty patiently and endure whatever persecution, penalties, or violence the authorities may impose on them. But it is just as clear that Christians are never, in the New Testament, instructed to participate in political movements, nor to accept positions of power or profit—whether civil or military—within any human government. They are also not taught to appeal to legal courts to seek compensation for wrongs done to them, nor to seek personal protection from civil or military authorities.

Assuming all of this, we now ask: Are Christians told to show respect, submission, and pay taxes to governments and their officials differently than they would to groups of people or individuals who are not part of a government structure? It appears that they are. Christians are to offer respect, submission, taxes, and customs to governments and rulers specifically in their role as public authorities. There must, therefore, be particular reasons for this special form of deference and honor. What are those reasons? Paul explains them in the passage already mentioned—Romans 13:1–7. But a difficulty arises in understanding exactly what he means by expressions like “ordained by God,” “ordinance of God,” and “ministers of God.” What is the true meaning of these phrases? Let us see if we can determine

#### IN WHAT SENSE "THE POWERS THAT BE ARE ORDAINED OF GOD."

It cannot be that Paul meant governments and rulers are just what they ought to be, or that everything they do is right. It cannot mean they are *incapable of doing wrong*, committing sin, or deserving punishment. Nor can it mean that kings, advisors, rulers, and magistrates are not *moral agents*, or that they are in any way exempt from the same moral obligations as everyone else: to love God with all their heart, to love their neighbors as themselves, to forgive those who wrong them, to love their enemies, to bless those who curse them, and to do good to those who hate them. It cannot mean anything that would alter God’s law, reverse right and wrong, or shield them from condemnation when they sin.

It must be understood in a more *general* way—a sense that recognizes the necessity of such authorities in the nature of human society, and that they are used by God’s providence for the good of humanity. In this sense, they are certainly ordained by God. And in this sense, kings, presidents, governors, and rulers are ministers of God—that is, instruments in the larger plan of His providence, serving to protect those who do good and to punish and restrain those who do evil.

This applies just as much to the most corrupt, unjust, and tyrannical rulers as it does to the more virtuous ones. It was just as true of Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Nero, and Robespierre as it was of Melchizedek, David, Antoninus, and

Washington. So, we must clearly distinguish between those who are *consciously* inspired and approved ministers of God, and those “ministers of God” who “do not carry the sword without purpose,” are “a terror to evildoers,” and “execute wrath” on the lawless. The latter often have no awareness that they are being used by God, that they are instruments in His hands, or that their actions serve any divine purpose. On the contrary, they are often fully aware that they are defying His laws and judgments, and that they are trampling on everything sacred and moral in pursuit of their own selfishness, ambition, revenge, and desires.

#### PHARAOH GOD'S MINISTER.

This is what the Scripture says about Pharaoh: “For this reason I allowed you to become king, so that I could display My power through you and make My name known throughout the earth.” But Pharaoh was completely unaware of this. It never entered his mind or influenced his motives. He acted entirely according to his own corrupt and wicked desires. And God punished him just as if his reign of tyranny had produced nothing but evil. Yet, in the broader providential sense, Pharaoh was “ordained by God”—he was God's servant or minister for the benefit of Israel, and for the punishment of the cruel Egyptians.

Pharaoh didn't know he was being used by God. He didn't intend any of the good that ultimately came from his actions. Because of that, he was judged and punished according to the evil he *did* intend. Still, it's likely that the entire human race has benefited in some way from his oppression of the Israelites, since that oppression hastened their exodus from Egypt. The good that resulted came not from *Pharaoh's* intentions, but from the wisdom and purpose of divine providence, which used even a tyrant like him as an unconscious agent of its merciful and beneficial plan.

#### THE MONARCH OF ASSYRIA GOD'S MINISTER.

It was the same with the Assyrian government and its king. The Scripture says: “O Assyrian, the rod of my anger, and the staff in their hand is my indignation. I will send him against a hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath I will give him a command, to seize the spoil, to take the prey, and to trample them down like mud in the streets. However, he does not intend this, nor does his heart think so.” And again, “So when the Lord has finished His whole work on Mount Zion and Jerusalem, I will punish the arrogance of the king of Assyria and the pride of his haughty looks. For he says, ‘*By my own strength I have done this, and by my wisdom, because I am so clever.*’ ” And God responds, “Shall the axe boast against the one who swings it? Shall the saw exalt itself above the one who uses it?” (Isaiah 10:5–7, 12–15).



In this way, the Assyrian government was ordained by God, in the same sense that the apostle Paul uses. Its king was made to be a "minister" or servant of God—an instrument of divine will. But this happened without his awareness and even against his own proud, ambitious, and vengeful intentions. Like Pharaoh before him, he was judged according to the evil he actually meant to do, not the good that God brought about through his actions. God made him a rod of correction for the hypocritical nation of Israel—he was, in God's hands, "a terror to evildoers," even though he himself was one of the greatest evildoers. He "did not carry the sword without purpose," though he had no idea he was being used for *divine* purposes. But here's the question: would this have been a good reason for the prophets and the faithful in Israel to join his government or serve in his army! *Of course not.* Yet, it was a good reason for them to continue proclaiming the truth, promoting righteousness, and patiently waiting for the deliverance that would come through God's providence.

#### NEBUCHADNEZZAR GOD'S MINISTER.

Nebuchadnezzar is another example of this kind of divine ordination and overruling. Scripture says: "Behold, I will send for all the families of the north, and Nebuchadnezzar, my servant (my minister), and bring them against this land..." And again: "When seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, declares the Lord, for their iniquity..." (Jeremiah 25:9,12).

Was Nebuchadnezzar *God's minister* for good to Jeremiah and the faithful, and an avenger to execute judgment on the wicked Israelites? Yes—this is what God made him. Was he someone who "did not carry the sword without purpose," and "a terror to evildoers"? Again, in that sense, he was. But was he aware of this role? Was it his intention? Did he act out of a desire to do what was right? Was he not, in fact, a deeply wicked man? And didn't God ultimately condemn and punish him?

Would it have been praiseworthy for Jeremiah and the faithful few among the Jews to join Nebuchadnezzar's army and fight for him? *Of course not.* What they did do was peacefully surrender to him and advise their fellow Israelites to submit to his rule—based on the understanding that God had decided to humble them for their national sins and had, in His providence, allowed Nebuchadnezzar to conquer them. But they never portrayed the invading king as righteous or approved by God in a moral or spiritual sense.

#### THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT.

If we turn to Paul's time and consider the Roman government—its emperors and their provincial governors—shouldn't we view them in the same light? True, we might find many laws, institutions, policies, and specific administrative acts that deserve praise, and which no good person would wish to discredit. But at the same



time, how much tyranny, oppression, cruelty, and utter depravity would come to light, provoking our disgust and horror?

What are we to think of Emperor Nero, under whose rule Paul, Peter, and thousands of Christians were executed—whose name has become synonymous with cruelty, persecution, and brutality? Yet he, too, was called a “minister of God,” “a terror to evildoers,” “an avenger to execute wrath,” someone who “did not carry the sword without purpose”—to whom tribute and honor were due, and toward whom Christians were commanded to show submissive obedience. Paul, Peter, and the Christian martyrs acted accordingly. And even though *Nero* persecuted them to death, it is undoubtedly true that, in God’s providence, Nero became—despite his wickedness—a minister of good for them. God caused all things to work together for their good, as those who truly loved righteousness.

How else can we understand the apostle’s teaching or make sense of the persecution inflicted by “the powers ordained by God” and rulers like Nero and his deputies, the so-called “ministers of God”? We certainly cannot believe for a moment that these “powers” were morally approved by God, or that those tyrannical monsters were His conscious “ministers”—His spokesmen or faithful agents. And yet, in the general, providential sense, all that Paul says about them is still *true*.

Is Paul’s declaration of truth meaningless or irrelevant? **Not at all.** It is essential for the comfort, guidance, and right conduct of Christians amid the chaos, noise, and apparent disorder of political and governmental affairs. By faith, they must recognize their Father’s hand at the helm of history—restraining human rage and steering even the strongest societal forces toward good. Without this understanding, they could lose hope in the world’s redemption and be drawn into the destructive currents of retaliation, revolution, violence, and war. But *with* this faith, they can do their duty without fear, trusting fully that “the Lord God omnipotent reigns” in righteousness over all governments, monarchs, kings, rulers, and magistrates—judging each according to their motives and actions, while at the same time overruling even their most wicked deeds for the specific benefit of the righteous and the broader good of the world.

#### RESPECTS WHEREIN GOVERNMENT IS ORDAINED OF GOD.

I now come to the following conclusions:

1. Government meets a basic human need and must exist wherever people live. In this sense, it is ordained by God.
2. Existing human governments *de facto* are corrupt, flawed, and imperfect versions of the true government *de jure*, that God, through Christianity, seeks to establish among humankind. Yet, because of humanity’s current low moral

state, these flawed systems are the closest people are capable of making to the true ideal. In this sense, government is ordained by God.

3. Even the worst governments are better than complete anarchy. They are the lesser of two evils, offering at least some structure and protection. In this respect, “the powers that be are ordained by God.”
4. Most governments uphold certain truths, enforce some justice, and aim to maintain order—sometimes even with good intentions. To the extent that they reflect divine justice and goodness, they are ordained by God.
5. When governments are fundamentally unjust, oppressive, or immoral, God still overrules them, using them as tools for restraining greater evils and for awakening the moral conscience of the righteous. In this way, even bad rulers become “ministers of God”—unwitting instruments that can serve a higher good, even while they act with evil intent.

Therefore, Christians should respect and submit to the governments under which they live—even if those governments are anti-Christian or persecuting. They should obey in all matters that do not conflict with God’s law, differ peacefully when needed, endure injustice patiently, and resist only in matters where obedience to human authority would mean disobeying God. And even then, they must bear the consequences with meekness and submission. At the same time, Christians must remain loyal to God’s kingdom, true to the teachings of Christ, and never compromise their faith for the sake of holding power, receiving honors, gaining wealth, or securing protection from human governments. If they can enter public office without diluting or compromising their Christianity, then they may do so. But if participation in government means abandoning Christ’s teachings, then they are morally bound to stay out of it—as peaceful, law-abiding subjects whose higher allegiance remains with God.

The Christian calling is nobler than that of the politician, statesman, or ruler. They must never betray that calling. If they remain faithful, they can lift human society closer to divine ideals. But if they compromise their principles to engage with corrupt systems in hopes of reforming them from within, they will fail. They will degrade themselves, and the government will become even worse. Christians must unwaveringly uphold the principles and teachings of Jesus. Whatever institutions or systems refuse to conform to those principles must be left to their own fate. God will manage the rest. As Scripture says, “There is no power but of God,” and all powers are under His sovereign control. The only concern for the Christian is to be *truly Christian*—to never be shaped into something contrary to that identity or to engage in anything that violates the essence of their divine calling.

If I have correctly understood this complex and important subject, then I believe I have effectively answered the common objection based on Romans 13 and similar

passages. I am confident that this interpretation is sound, and I do not think critics of Christian non-resistance can offer a better explanation—one that aligns more faithfully with Scripture or with their own stated beliefs about the nature and role of civil government. All that remains is to briefly address another part of the objection: that Paul, on certain occasions, appealed to the authority of the Roman government—despite its idolatry, militarism, and tyranny—in order to gain protection, justice, or immunity.

#### PAUL'S CONDUCT IN RELATION TO GOVERNMENT.

This is a misunderstanding, or at least a misrepresentation of the facts. Did Paul ever initiate a legal case to seek compensation for harm done to his person, property, or rights? Did he ever seek help from civil or military authorities for personal protection while he was free and engaged in his usual work? Never. There is no such instance on record. The cases that have been cited all took place when he was already a prisoner under government custody.

The first example is found in Acts 16:37. Paul and Silas had been imprisoned and severely beaten by order of the magistrates in Philippi. The following morning, the magistrates sent instructions to the jailer to release them. But Paul responded, “They have beaten us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison. And now they want to send us away quietly? Absolutely not. Let them come themselves and escort us out.” As a result, the magistrates—realizing they had acted unlawfully—were eager to admit their mistake and release the prisoners honorably. That was all Paul asked for. He and Silas had done nothing, not even by the standards of the local laws, to deserve such harsh treatment. Knowing they had a legal right to redress as Roman citizens, they wanted the magistrates and the public to be fully aware of the truth. However, they did not pursue any legal action for compensation; they were content to forgive the offense, provided they were recognized as the injured party and released with their reputation intact. This is precisely what every non-resistant person should do in similar circumstances. It would have dishonored the gospel if Paul and Silas had sneaked away secretly, allowing the public to assume they were guilty and had been quietly let go as a favor. Christianity is as bold, faithful, and courageous in defending its rights and maintaining its honor as it is non-resistant in refusing to return harm for harm. It is never cowardly or evasive, but always open, honest, dignified, and godlike.

The next example is found in Acts chapter 22. A mob of Jews had attacked Paul and were trying to kill him. While they were beating him, the Roman commander arrived with his soldiers, arrested Paul, had him bound with chains, and brought him to the barracks. As they reached the steps, Paul asked for permission to speak to the angry crowd. He was allowed to speak and was listened to with attention for a while. But when he declared that God had sent him to preach the gospel to the

Gentiles, the crowd erupted with outrage, shouting, “Rid the earth of him! He’s not fit to live!” As they shouted, threw off their cloaks, and flung dust into the air, the commander ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks and interrogated by flogging, so he could understand why the people were shouting against him. This was a shocking situation: an innocent man, falsely accused and attacked by a violent, prejudiced mob, was about to be tortured to extract a confession to some imagined crime. Knowing that, as a Roman citizen, he was protected from such abuse, Paul asked—just as they were tying him with leather straps—“Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn’t been convicted?” This question stopped the process immediately. “Be careful what you’re doing,” the centurion warned the commander, “this man is a Roman citizen.” The commander came and asked Paul directly, “Are you a Roman citizen?” Paul replied, “Yes.” The commander said, “I had to pay a high price for my citizenship.” Paul answered, “But I was born a citizen.” Immediately, those who were about to interrogate him backed off. The commander himself became afraid when he realized he had bound a Roman citizen.

This illustrates one of the great advantages of Roman law and citizenship: a Roman citizen had to be treated with respect and was entitled to a fair hearing, even if he was suspected of serious crimes. He could not be punished like a criminal unless properly convicted. This principle is simply basic justice and common sense. Notice, Paul didn’t recently buy his Roman citizenship in preparation for such dangers—he was born with that right. All he did was remind the authorities that they were about to break the law by flogging an uncondemned Roman citizen. He issued no threats—he simply held them accountable to their own law. It was his right to be treated fairly until a lawful trial had taken place. He asserted his rights in the most humble and respectful way and left the decision to those in power. How fair, honorable, gentle, noble, and non-resistant was his conduct! There is nothing in his actions that a modern-day Christian non-resistant should not emulate.

The next example happened shortly afterward and is recorded in Acts chapter 23. Paul was still in custody at the barracks and had just had a partial hearing before the chief priests and their council. Meanwhile, forty of his most extreme enemies formed a conspiracy, swearing not to eat or drink until they had killed him. They planned to request that the commander bring Paul back before the council for further questioning, intending to ambush and kill him on the way. Paul’s nephew heard about the plot and told Paul, who then called one of the centurions and said, “Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him.” The young man delivered his message, and the commander quietly told him to keep the matter secret. To prevent violence, the commander ordered a detachment of 470 soldiers to escort Paul by night to Caesarea, where he would be under the care of Governor Felix. In this way, the threat was neutralized. Some have interpreted this to mean that Paul requested military protection. But did Paul ask for help? Did he request a military escort? Did he suggest or recommend anything other than simply asking

that his nephew be taken to the commander to deliver a warning? No, he did none of that. He was a helpless prisoner under the protection of the commander's troops. It was the commander's responsibility to ensure the safety of a Roman citizen. Paul knew, based on the commander's previous actions, that he was committed to following the law. Once Paul became aware of the plot against his life, he did what anyone should have done in his situation: made sure the commander knew about the danger. He had no freedom to escape the danger himself—he was a prisoner. The conspirators planned to kill him under false pretenses of giving him a fair hearing. What else could he have done to save his life and show proper respect for the commander, other than relay the information? It was his duty to do so, and it would have been wrong to remain silent. He made no plans for retaliation. He did not seek punishment for his enemies. He suggested no violent measures, issued no threats, and made no demands. He simply ensured that the truth was conveyed to the right person and then humbly left the decision to the commander. The commander, for his part, acted wisely and peacefully, arranging Paul's transfer to avoid any bloodshed. Paul behaved exactly as any Christian non-resistant should have in such a situation—calmly, wisely, and above reproach.

Paul's "*appeal to Caesar*" came next, as part of these events. It's recorded in Acts chapter 25. What was the nature and purpose of this appeal? Paul had been falsely accused, imprisoned for a long time, and partially tried for heresy and sedition. After two years, his trial was still unresolved. When Festus became the new governor, he found Paul still in chains. The high priest and Jewish leaders reopened their case and asked Festus to send Paul to Jerusalem, secretly planning to ambush and kill him on the way. When that failed, they traveled to Caesarea to present their accusations in court. Paul again denied all the charges, and nothing could be proven against him. Wanting to please the Jews, Festus asked Paul, "Are you willing to go to Jerusalem and be tried there?" Paul responded, "I am standing before Caesar's court, where I should be tried. I have done nothing wrong to the Jews, as you well know. If I am guilty of any crime deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges are false, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar." What a noble and Christian response! A trial in Jerusalem would not have been fair. To suggest it under those circumstances was simply adding insult to injury. If Paul had to be judged, he had the right to a hearing before a higher, more impartial court—at Rome. God had already directed him in a vision to go there to preach the gospel. His defense was essentially the defense of the gospel itself. That's why he appealed to Caesar. He wasn't accusing anyone or trying to punish his enemies. He wasn't acting as a prosecutor—he was the accused, unjustly imprisoned, and forced to choose between an unfair trial or exercising his legal right to be heard in Rome. He chose what was both his right and his responsibility to the cause of Christ. And in doing so, as in every other case, Paul acted exactly as he should have—just as any Christian non-resistant would be obligated to act. None of these examples show any

inconsistency between Paul's behavior and the principles of non-resistance that some critics try to use them to disprove.

### CONCLUSION.

Having now thoroughly addressed all the major objections to my doctrine that I recall seeing raised from Scripture, I confidently appeal to the understanding and conscience of the Christian reader for a favorable judgment. Have I not convincingly demonstrated that the Holy Scriptures teach the doctrine of non-resistance, as defined in the first chapter of this work? Have I not fairly answered the scriptural objections raised against it? Is there any doctrine or duty taught in the Bible that is supported by more compelling evidence? Or that can be more clearly defended against objections? It seems to me that sincere and open-minded individuals, after carefully studying this subject, can reach no other conclusion. I recognize that this is a weighty conclusion—one that leads to the most profound changes in beliefs, emotions, behavior, and character throughout Christianity and the wider world. But wouldn't such a change be a glorious and beneficial transformation? When all who truly revere the Bible, as in any sacred sense the word of God to humanity, come to view the Old Testament as a prophecy and preparation for the New—pointing ahead to the full development of moral excellence under the reign of Jesus Christ; when they see in *His* teachings, *His* example, and *His* spirit a perfect expression of divine wisdom and goodness; and when they come to believe that *His* righteousness, internalized in human hearts and lived out in daily life, is the *only* remedy for all the world's disorders!

“Fly swifter round, ye wheels of time,  
And bring the welcome day.”



## CHAPTER IV.

### NON-RESISTANCE NOT CONTRARY TO NATURE.

Nature and the laws of nature defined – Self-preservation the first law of nature – What is the true method of self-preservation? – Demurrer of the objector – The objector still persists: analogy of the animals – Common method of self-preservation certainly false – Five great laws of human nature considered – These laws radically harmonious – Non-Resistance in perfect unison with these laws – A law of universal nature, like begets its like – General illustrations in common life – Special illustrations: 1. Subdued pride and scorn, 2. The man whose temper was broken, 3. The colored woman and the sailor, 4. The haymakers, 5. The two students, 6. Two neighbors and the manure, 7. Impounding the horse, 8. Two neighbors and the hens, 9. Henry and Albert, 10. The subdued hatter, 11. The revolutionary soldier, 12. Ex-President Jefferson and the cooper's shop, 13. Wm. Ladd and his neighbor Pulsifer – Conclusion.

People who oppose non-resistance often say—loudly and confidently—that it goes against natural law, so it can't possibly be true, no matter how well it's supported by the Bible. This chapter is meant to prove that claim wrong. I'm going to show that Christian non-resistance actually fits perfectly with natural law when you look at all the ways it works in the real world. I'll back this up with arguments, real-life examples, and facts.

### NATURE AND THE LAWS OF NATURE DEFINED.

What do we mean by “nature” and “the laws of nature”? These terms get thrown around a lot, especially by a certain type of person, but they're often used more casually than clearly understood. It's true that these words can have a wide range of meanings, but for this discussion, we need to be precise. Let's define “nature” as the essential parts, qualities, and abilities that make something what it is. These are the things that must be there for something to exist in its true form, whether it's something simple or complex. If something about a person or thing isn't essential—if it's not a necessary part of what that thing is—then it's not really part of its nature. It's just an extra or added feature that could be changed or removed without changing the basic nature of the thing. Let's take human nature as our focus. There are certain core elements—physical, mental, emotional, and moral traits—that are essential to being human. These traits are shared by all people, and they're what we mean when we talk about human nature. But there are also many other traits and behaviors that come from individual experiences, cultures, or circumstances. These are not part of essential human nature, because they can be changed or removed over time without changing what it means to be human. Now, about the “laws of nature.” These are the regular patterns or rules we observe in how nature behaves.

When we notice that something always seems to happen the same way in the same situation, we call that a law of nature. It's a predictable pattern that seems to govern how things work. But we should keep in mind that our understanding of these laws is limited. They are often talked about more than they're truly understood. These laws are really just the regular ways things seem to behave, based on what we've observed so far. Behind all of this, many believe, is a higher power—God—who is the ultimate source of all these patterns. So we should stay humble when talking about the laws of nature. There are a few things we can be very sure about, but many others we only partially understand. And it's easy to think we know more than we actually do. In reality, even about the things we think we understand best, our knowledge is still small. If we had a few thousand more years to observe, we'd probably realize just how little we actually know. Still, we should try to reason carefully from what we do know, and keep learning as we go.

### SELF-PRESERVATION THE FIRST LAW OF NATURE.

People often repeat the phrase, "Self-preservation is the first law of nature." I agree with that—so far, so good. Then they say, "That means we must defend ourselves against anything that threatens to harm or destroy us." I agree with that too. But then they take it further: They say, "Because of this, people inevitably end up fighting each other, causing injuries, and sometimes killing—especially in extreme cases. That's why things like killing in self-defense, war, and punishment are justified. Nature demands them. The law of self-preservation makes them necessary. So, non-resistance must be wrong and unrealistic. It goes against nature and can't work in the real world." Let's take a closer look at those bold claims. Yes, I've agreed that self-preservation is a basic instinct of nature. And yes, it pushes us to protect ourselves when we're threatened. I'll even admit that, in practice, most people—including animals—do fight, hurt, and even kill each other in what they believe is self-defense, or in pursuit of something they think is necessary to survive. But admitting that just means I'm recognizing a sad truth: that people often act foolishly and wrongly. Just because this happens often doesn't mean it's right—or that it's the only way.

### WHAT IS THE TRUE METHOD OF SELF-PRESERVATION.

Now let's really think about this: Is the usual way people try to protect themselves—the method of fighting back and using force—actually the right way? Or is it possibly a terrible approach that ends up doing the opposite of what it's supposed to do? Let's look at the evidence. If this common method is truly the best, then it should generally work well. It should keep people safe and protect life better than any other option. But has it done that? I don't believe it has. Just look at history. Even by a very conservative estimate, around fourteen billion people have been

killed by human hands—through war, violence, and punishment. That's enough people to fill eighteen Earths with today's population. Imagine the unimaginable pain and suffering all those people—and their loved ones—must have gone through. What if we could see and hear all their agony at once? What if their cries filled the air, their blood formed a vast lake mixed with the tears of the grieving, their bodies were piled high in one massive heap, or their bones stretched across a field like a graveyard? Would we still believe this is the best method of self-preservation? Would it still seem like the smart, moral, or effective path to follow? Wouldn't we be forced to ask: "Is there a better way?" Shouldn't we begin to suspect that this method—praised as necessary for survival—is actually just the product of blind instinct, false hope, and centuries of human self-deception? If this is the best way nature has to offer, then life itself begins to feel tragically meaningless, since we preserve it at such a horrifying cost. Now, imagine a different outcome. If only a few thousand—or even a few million—had died from violence, and if justice and peace had consistently won out... If violent aggressors had been quickly stopped by brave defenders and the world had become more just and peaceful over time... If violence truly discouraged more violence, eventually bringing lasting peace... Then we might accept this method as effective. But we know better. History shows that those who live by the sword usually die by it. Now think about this: What if, from the very beginning—from the time of Abel—no one had ever fought back? What if every person who was hurt or wronged had refused to respond with violence or threats? Yes, the aggressors would have had free rein to rob, hurt, and even kill—but would they have caused even a fraction of the death and misery we've seen under the current system of self-defense by violence? You'd have to be incredibly bold—or blind—to say yes. The truth is, humanity has worked against itself. We've betrayed our own hopes. We've been misled by our pride, ignorance, and desire for control. We refused to listen to God and insisted on doing things our own way—even when that way turned us into murderers and victims of our own violence. But even now, God calls out to us. He offers to make us wise, good, and truly safe. He offers to teach us the real way to survive and thrive—the way of non-resistance taught by Jesus Christ. But sadly, we're still clinging to our old, broken ways. We hardly even hear the voice of the one true friend who wants to save us. But when we finally do listen—then we will truly live.

#### A DEMURRER OF THE OBJECTOR.

If we judge it by the results, the popular and widely praised method of protecting ourselves through violence and retaliation has clearly failed. People might argue, "That's unfair. You're blaming it for the deaths of 14 billion people, but it's only responsible for those that happened in self-defense, just wars, punishments, and necessary injuries. The rest are the fault of cruel, unprovoked attackers. Plus, you're ignoring all the lives and injuries it has saved." Here's my response: I'm not saying violent resistance caused every death. But I do believe it caused most of them, and

more importantly, it has completely failed to stop the killing. It simply doesn't work as a reliable way to keep people safe. Maybe it helped in certain situations or places, but what about the bigger picture? After thousands of years of using violence to defend ourselves, the world is still full of conflict. In fact, we spend more on weapons and war than we do on religion, government, and education combined. That should make us question whether we've been fooled. If we stopped using violence for protection, yes, there would still be murders and cruelty by unprovoked aggressors. That would be terrible—but not as bad as the massive, ongoing destruction we've seen. And over time, public opinion would shift, and people would reject that kind of aggression. Also, let's not forget: every side in a fight believes they're acting in self-defense. After a few sword fights, gunshots, and battles, everyone claims they're only trying to protect themselves. One side says their honor was attacked, another says their body, their property, or even just their pride was hurt. Everyone insists they're defending themselves according to "the law of nature." So what happens? No one can agree on who started it, and only God could sort out who's most to blame. That's the chaos that comes from using violence to protect ourselves. It claims to prevent aggression but always ends up fueling it. It promises safety but actually leads to danger, war, and suffering. It threatens violence to keep peace—but ends up causing more war. It's been deceptive from the beginning: like Satan pretending to drive out Satan, it only makes things worse. Instead of keeping us safe, it leads to our destruction. That's why we should reject it.

#### THE OBJECTOR STILL PERSISTS - ANALOGY OF THE ANIMALS.

But the critic still refuses to back down. He says, "It's just the nature of all animals to fight to survive and protect what's theirs. Humans are no different—it's in our nature to fight. That's just how we are. We've always been this way, and we always will be, as long as there's injustice, violence, or abuse in the world. Peace will only come when no one gives others a reason to fight back. Until then, people will resist, they will fight—it's just human nature, no matter what it costs." Here's my response: Not so fast. You're making a lot of assumptions. In fact, your logic actually proves too much. If you argue that fighting back is human nature because people have always done it, then you also have to admit that attacking others must be human nature too. After all, humans have always started fights too—just like predators in the animal kingdom—since the days of Cain. Does that mean humans are naturally aggressors, attackers, criminals, and murderers? And if we've always done those things, does that mean we'll always do them? You say that war and violence in self-defense will never stop until people stop attacking. But let's be honest: will aggression ever truly end? Can it? Is it a built-in part of human nature? If your logic is consistent, then the only possible conclusion is this: that human beings are doomed by nature to fight and hurt each other forever—whether as aggressors or defenders. That kind of thinking leaves no room for change, hope, or progress. And honestly, only an atheist should argue that way, because it denies the possibility of

moral or spiritual transformation. I don't believe there's any natural law that forces people to hurt one another—whether by attacking or by fighting back. No more than there's a natural law that forces people to become alcoholics. People can change. They can stop glorifying war. They can choose not to hurt others—whether as aggressors or in retaliation. So the real question is this: Should we encourage both sides—bad people to stop attacking and good people to stop retaliating? Or should we only tell the bad not to attack, while allowing the good to keep hurting others in the name of self-defense? The good want the bad to change. So how should they try to inspire that change? By repaying evil with good, or by returning evil for evil? One helps, the other makes things worse. God has already made it clear: the work must begin from both ends at the same time. The bad must stop attacking, and the good must stop hurting in self-defense. Who should take the lead in this moral reform? Should the good wait until the bad change, before they themselves do? Christianity says no. It teaches that we must be “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world.” It calls us to suffer wrong rather than do wrong, and to overcome evil with good. Is that actually possible? Or is there some unstoppable law of nature that dooms us to endless cycles of attack and revenge? I say no—there is no such law.

#### COMMON METHOD OF SELF-PRESERVATION CERTAINLY FALSE.

From everything we've discussed, it's clear that trying to preserve life by responding to aggression with harmful or deadly force is the wrong approach. It has failed repeatedly. It hasn't accomplished what it was supposed to. Instead, it often causes the very problems it's meant to solve—and makes them even worse. This method doesn't come from any natural law; rather, it's a serious error in human thinking about how to handle threats. Therefore, we must find a better alternative. It's also clear that aggression and violent resistance aren't inevitable parts of human nature. Nature doesn't force us to attack or to retaliate with harm. Non-resistance—as I've defined it—is just as natural as non-aggression. People can learn to give up both types of harmful behavior without losing any essential part of what makes them human. In fact, people who grow up with a commitment to moral excellence and non-violence will become more fully developed as human beings—in body, mind, spirit, and character—than those who don't. So, non-resistance isn't against nature. In fact, if it were widely adopted and practiced, it would lead to the most effective and universal kind of self-preservation. It would turn out to be the true method that fulfills the deepest natural instinct to protect life. That's why I now assert with confidence that Christian non-resistance aligns completely with the true laws of nature. More than that—it's essential for correcting the harmful effects of the many negative influences that have shaped how we've acted until now.



## FIVE GREAT LAWS OF HUMAN NATURE CONSIDERED

Let us bring into view the prominent laws of nature. I will mention five of the most fundamental. They are: self-preservation, social affinity, religious and moral obligation, rational harmony, and progression. These may be called universal and eternal.

Under the law of self-preservation, which is essentially identical with self-love, man instinctively desires to live and be happy. He dreads death; he seeks to avoid injury; he strives to keep whatever good he has and to acquire more in countless ways. This law constantly urges him to take care of himself and secure what he believes to be his highest welfare. But the ways and means of doing this are not dictated or determined by this law. These come from another law. As a result, it often happens that people, in ignorance, adopt methods of self-preservation that actually defeat their purpose and lead to their own harm or ruin.

Under the law of social affinity, men and women form unions, raise families, form friendships, build communities, and create states and nations. All social ties, affections, sympathies, and connections arise under this law. Man is, by necessity, a social being. He is meant to share both the joys and the burdens of life with others. Yet this law, powerful as it is, does not teach him the best ways to live socially—the best forms of social organization or interaction. So it happens that he often forms the most inappropriate associations and helps sustain the most corrupt and harmful social institutions. Still, he always has been—and always must be—a social being.

Under the law of religious and moral obligation, man feels the need to recognize, worship, and serve a higher power. He feels dependent, grateful, and responsible. He understands there is a right and a wrong in human conduct; that he can choose either; and that he is accountable for the choice he makes—for how he uses or abuses the abilities he possesses. When he does what he believes is wrong, he feels guilty; when he does what he believes is right, he feels approved. This gives rise to a constant inner conflict between the lower and higher aspects of his nature. The carnal, animal side craves indulgence. The spiritual side says, “Do right, and reject all else, no matter how tempting.” His appetites urge him down the broad road to destruction, but his moral sense binds him to God and eternity, forbidding any indulgence that would jeopardize his spiritual well-being. He must obey God; he must deny himself; he must do right at all costs. He must not seek even to preserve his life or gain any good by doing wrong. Thus, this law restrains, disciplines, and elevates him. Yet even this mighty law does not automatically reveal the true God, or the true standards of right and wrong. Hence, countless people have worshipped false gods, practiced empty rituals, and sincerely believed wrong was right. Still, man has always been—and must ever be—a religious and moral being, to some extent. He cannot escape this law of his nature.



Next comes the law of rational harmony, or consistency. This law causes people to take pleasure in harmony—when things agree and make sense together, both in part and in whole. When confronted with contradictions, absurdities, and disharmony—either within themselves or in the world—they feel disturbed, uneasy, and dissatisfied. Therefore, their minds, especially their reasoning faculties, are constantly engaged in seeking out and resolving these contradictions. If they can do nothing more, they criticize and complain. If more advanced, they become reformers—stirring the world to action. They may reform religion, morals, government, education, science, art—anything that comes within their reach, whether in theory or practice. And even if they cannot build what ought to be, they will at least attempt to tear down or improve what ought not to be. This restlessness of the human mind stems from a deep, mysterious, and irresistible urge to eliminate contradiction and bring all things into harmony. This is the great longing of the soul. Where contradiction and inconsistency exist, we can be certain that there is falsehood and wrong—for truth and righteousness must be in harmony. They cannot involve contradiction and conflict where they alone prevail. Thus, this is a universal, powerful law of human nature. It has done much to correct the mistakes caused by human ignorance and depravity—but it still has much more to accomplish.

The fifth law is that of progression. This law works alongside the others—it is not an afterthought but an essential part of man's nature. It drives him to seek something higher and better than his current state. It urges him to observe, to imitate, to learn, to explore, to invent, to hope, to strive, to improve, and to move forward. It keeps him from being content with stagnation. His nature simply will not let him remain stationary.

#### THESE LAWS RADICALLY HARMONIOUS.

All these basic laws of human nature must ultimately agree with one another. They can't truly be in conflict. Once each of them reaches its full potential, humanity will become something beautiful and noble. The whole human race will be like one big, loving, wise, and peaceful family. Think about what that would look like: The law of self-preservation (or self-love) will finally succeed when the law of social connection makes us see every other person as part of ourselves — someone we could never harm. This will happen when the law of moral and spiritual responsibility takes full control — when our impulses are guided by our sense of duty, when our souls are deeply connected to the true God, and when doing the right thing always leads to the greatest good. The process will speed up thanks to our deep need for harmony and consistency. This need pushes us to uncover the truth, fix what's broken, challenge harmful ideas and customs, and find the best path forward. There is a real God, and this drive for harmony will keep urging us

forward until we find Him. There is a true right and wrong — something eternal — and this same drive will eventually help everyone recognize it. There is real harmony in the way things should be, and we will keep striving, struggling, and evolving until we finally achieve it. That's where the law of progression comes in. It keeps us growing — learning more, discovering more truth, and building on every success. We'll move beyond ignorance, error, and wrongdoing. Bit by bit, as we improve every part of life that needs improving, all the conflicts and disharmony in the world will be resolved. Eventually, we'll live in a world full of peace, goodness, and joy. This is what God wants. This is what prophets have always predicted. This is what good people everywhere have always hoped and prayed for. One day, there will be no more war, no more violence, no more injustice, and no more suffering.

"All crimes shall cease, and ancient fraud shall fail;  
Returning Justice lift aloft her scale.  
Peace o'er the world her olive wand extend,  
And white robed Innocence from heaven descend."

- "Messiah" by Alexander Pope

*Nothing will hurt or destroy anymore, because everyone will truly know God.*

#### NON-RESISTANCE IN PERFECT UNISON WITH THESE LAWS.

Does the idea of Christian non-resistance go against human nature? Does it go against the law of self-preservation? Does it aim to destroy life or preserve it, increase suffering or make people safer and happier? It actually does the opposite of what the law of self-preservation demands. It insists that human life, which is often treated carelessly and sacrificed too easily, should be respected and protected. Is this idea against the law of social connection? Quite the opposite. It extends a hand of love to all people, urging everyone to see themselves as part of one big family. It asks us to stop hurting and persecuting each other, to love one another, and to endure harm from others rather than resort to violence. Isn't this exactly what social connection calls for? Does the doctrine go against religious and moral obligations? No, it is a key part of God's law, demonstrated and taught by Jesus. It's the core of moral responsibility. To live this way is the highest form of obedience to God — it's putting duty first and following eternal principles of right and wrong. Is it against the law of rational harmony? Certainly not. It rejects all war, violence, and conflict. It opposes fighting wrong with wrong, or evil with evil, and provides a strong foundation for peace and harmony in the world. If people would only stop hurting each other, we could quickly find the truth and correct mistakes. But instead, brute force is often used to defend false ideas, crushing truth under the weight of armies and power. "Might makes right," and foolishness continues, upheld by force. Is this idea against the law of progress? It's actually a direct result of progress. It assumes that humanity has fought, struggled, and acted out of frustration for long enough. It's time for us to act like rational beings, governed by moral power. We've lived

according to base desires for too long. Now, we can start to think and act on higher principles, overcoming evil with good, and growing closer to an angelic way of living. It's a doctrine of spiritual and moral growth, moving us from a primitive, barbaric state to one of Christian perfection. Non-resistance is not against the laws of nature. It actually aligns perfectly with them. It only goes against the wrong, foolish, self-destructive ways people have used in the past to try and follow these laws. It fights against ignorance, stubbornness, and bad habits – not against human well-being or nature's laws. It's like an alcoholic who says that quitting drinking goes against nature. The alcohol itself is what's really going against their nature. Even though they believe drinking helps them, it's actually ruining their life. Likewise, people who rely on violence for self-preservation are making the same mistake. They think that without it, their lives and rights would be unprotected. But one day, they'll realize they were wrong.

#### A LAW OF UNIVERSAL NATURE. LIKE BEGETS ITS LIKE.

I want to introduce another universal law of nature, which includes humans: like produces like – physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually. Does non-resistance go against this law? Does it lead to peace, or does it lead to more violence and resistance? This is a key question, and answering it will help us settle the issue. Does true non-resistance create a spirit of peace, or does it lead to more aggression and violence? Does the practice of non-resistance calm the attacker, or does it encourage them to continue their attack? If non-resistance causes the attacker to get more violent, it would go against the law of like producing like. But if non-resistance calms the situation, it would follow that law and promote peace. Let's think about this. Why does someone being attacked fight back? They'll say, "To defend myself." But why defend themselves by hurting the attacker? They do it because they believe it's the only way to protect themselves. This is where injury creates more injury – one injury leads to another. People think the only way to respond is with "an eye for an eye," or "a tooth for a tooth." They say things like, "I'll treat him the way he treated me. He deserves it. I'll show him what it feels like." This shows that the desire to hurt others creates a cycle of hurt. If I strike back in retaliation, it's likely the attacker will strike again, and the cycle of violence continues. Eventually, the weaker person might give up, not because they've learned anything, but because they can't fight back anymore. The stronger person, though, will just keep fighting until they win. If the aggressor is stronger, they'll keep fighting until they defeat the weaker person. If the aggressor is weaker, they'll stop fighting because they have no choice, but they will hold onto their anger and wait for the right moment to get revenge. If conscience or justice were working in this situation, it would be more effective if the person being attacked refused to fight back. So, when we consider this, the argument actually supports my point about non-resistance. If people didn't retaliate, it would help break the cycle of violence, not make it worse.

## GENERAL ILLUSTRATIONS IN COMMON LIFE.

Let's look at everyday situations, with examples we all know from life. We see one person who is very combative but has weak defenses against others. When this person meets another with the same combative nature, they are almost guaranteed to fight, argue, or at least have a heated disagreement. This person is full of anger, and when they come into contact with someone like them, they both escalate the situation. Even people who are usually calm can be provoked into fighting when they're around this kind of person. He "magnetizes" them, making them more likely to act out. If he can get along with anyone, it's only those who, by nature or principle, are non-resistant and patient. Even though these peaceful people may feel uncomfortable around him, they can manage to stay calm and keep things from escalating. We've all seen people like this. And we know that no amount of violence or aggression will change them. Beating them, injuring them, or responding with violence will only make them more aggressive. The only way to deal with such people is through patience, understanding, and avoiding violence.

Now, think about a person who is overly proud and arrogant. When two people like this meet, they will both become defensive, irritated, and confrontational. They'll criticize each other, not realizing that the arrogance they see in the other person is just a reflection of their own attitude. Suppose one of these proud people is in a group of humble, modest people. If he treats them with disrespect or contempt, what happens? The modest people will begin to feel their self-esteem rise. They'll stand taller and think, "He thinks he's better than us, but we deserve respect too!" This sudden increase in self-esteem is caused by the arrogance of the other person.

Now, consider someone who is genuinely humble and respectful, no matter how successful or influential they are. This person treats everyone the same, from the rich to the poor. How do people react to them? "They're not proud," one might say. "They treat everyone with kindness," another will add. Even those who might be jealous or critical of others will soften when they meet someone so humble and kind. Like attracts like.

Next, imagine a person who is always trying to get the best deal, always looking for a way to take advantage of others. He's never satisfied unless he's made a profit, no matter how small. What happens when he deals with others? His selfishness "magnetizes" theirs. People he deals with become just as determined to get the best deal and resist his attempts to cheat them. They might even get angry over small things, like a half-cent, just to avoid being taken advantage of. On the other hand, if someone is generous and fair, always making sure to treat others well, people react by being more relaxed about small matters and even letting go of petty concerns. Like produces like.

Then there's the person who insults others with harsh words and abusive language. What usually happens when someone is insulted? Unless the person is very calm or has strong principles, they will likely retaliate with just as much anger and harsh words. But if a true Christian, who practices non-resistance, is insulted, the insults fall off them like rain on a shield. The attacker might try again, but the Christian remains calm and unbothered. Over time, the attacker might feel embarrassed and ashamed, and in the end, they may even apologize. This shows how a calm and kind response can disarm hostility. As the saying goes, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but harsh words stir up anger."

These everyday examples show that non-resistance actually works in harmony with human nature. If we want to stop violence, cruelty, and crime, we must understand that responding to evil with evil will never solve anything. Like produces like. If we meet violence and wrongdoing with more violence, we will only escalate the situation and make things worse. We will create more harm and suffering, even if we feel justified in defending ourselves. The only way to break the cycle is to respond with the opposite attitude – with peace and non-resistance. If we do not do this, we will only continue to reproduce the same evils we're trying to fight against.

#### SPECIAL ILLUSTRATIONS - FACTS FROM REAL LIFE.

Now I want to share a series of real-life examples that support the ideas I've been arguing for and help prove my point.

##### SUBDUED PRIDE AND SCORN.

A woman in a nearby town had repeatedly treated a kind-hearted young man with open contempt and unkindness. Neither of them were part of high society, but for no real reason, she often insulted him and acted like he wasn't even worthy of basic respect. One day, this woman had a serious misfortune—she borrowed a horse and carriage, but the horse got loose and wrecked the carriage. She was held responsible and had to pay for the damages, which was a heavy financial burden for her. She was very upset and stressed about it. The young man, despite how she had treated him, chose to respond with kindness. He decided to help her. He donated a generous amount of money himself, asked others to contribute too, and quickly raised enough to cover her loss. Before she even knew he was helping, he showed up, quietly handed her the money, and left—without waiting for thanks or recognition. She was stunned. She broke down in tears and said she would never again look down on, speak badly of, or treat anyone—especially him—with such cruelty. Was anything about this story unnatural?



## THE MAN WHOSE TEMPER WAS BROKEN.

A man I know once told me he had learned, from personal experience, that the principle of non-resistance truly works. He said that although he didn't usually live by that principle, one particular moment in his life showed him its power. He had been raised by a childless uncle who was known for having a violent temper. This uncle often lashed out in anger—beating both animals and boys under his care whenever they did something wrong. He had little patience, and when upset, he was quick to punish harshly. One winter, when the man was almost grown, he and his uncle went into the woods with a team of oxen to bring home firewood. On their way back, the sled hit something hidden under the snow and got completely stuck. The uncle, furious, shouted at the young man to whip the oxen and force them through. He tried, but it didn't work—the sled wouldn't budge. Then the uncle lost control. He grabbed a large stick from the load and charged at the young man, blaming him for the trouble. Sensing real danger but feeling innocent, the young man made a quick decision. Instead of running or fighting back, he calmly reached out, took hold of the club, handed his uncle the whip, and said, "You're not going to beat me with that—take the whip instead." The uncle, shocked but still raging, dropped the stick and grabbed the whip. He beat the young man severely—on his head, back, and shoulders—then threw the whip back at him and ordered, "Now drive that team home!" Still calm, the young man replied, "No. I've done my best. I'm not going to try again. You drive them." So the uncle turned his fury on the oxen, yelling and whipping them until he exhausted himself. Then, regaining a bit of sense, he searched around and found that a large fallen tree was buried in the snow, blocking the sled. He told his nephew to cut it loose. While chopping, his back stinging from the beating, the young man looked up and asked, "Uncle, do you feel any better after that cruel whipping you gave me?" The uncle went pale and didn't answer. He turned and walked away. The young man finished the work, got the sled free, and drove the team home. From that day on, the uncle changed completely. He never lost his temper again—never hit, scolded, or mistreated him or the animals. In fact, he became so gentle that even a mischievous boy he later raised got away with all sorts of antics without punishment. After some time, the man asked him, "Uncle, what changed you so much?" With a heavy look, the old man replied, "Do you remember that awful beating I gave you when the sled got stuck?" "Too well," the man answered. "That broke my temper," said the uncle. "I never felt the same after that. I swore I'd never strike another cruel blow again—and I haven't wanted to since." Tears streamed down his face, and he turned away. Now that his uncle has passed, the man often reflects on that moment. It convinced him that the doctrine of non-resistance is absolutely true.



## COLORED WOMAN AND THE SAILOR.

An elderly Black woman in New York City—well known in her neighborhood for her dignity and kindness—was walking down the street one day on her way to a nearby store. She was quietly smoking her tobacco pipe, minding her own business, when a sailor, a bit tipsy and feeling playful in a mischievous way, came swaggering toward her. As he passed her, he rudely bumped her aside and, with a careless flick of his hand, knocked the pipe from her mouth, shattering it. He stopped and turned, expecting to get a rise out of her—perhaps some angry words or a dramatic reaction that he could laugh at. But to his surprise, the woman simply bent down, gathered the broken pieces of her pipe, and looked up at him—not with anger, but with calm dignity. Her face showed sorrow, compassion, and a kind of maternal pity. She said quietly, “God forgive you, my son, as I do.” Those words struck him harder than any scolding could have. Something shifted in him. His swagger faded. A lump rose in his throat and his eyes welled up with tears. Deeply ashamed and moved by her grace, he suddenly wanted to make amends. Without another word, he reached into both of his pockets—overflowing with change—and emptied them into her hands, saying, “God bless you, kind mother. I’ll never do something like that again.”

## THE HAYMAKERS

Two neighbors were working on adjacent plots of marshland, each gathering hay. At one point, one of the men ran into trouble—his team and loaded wagon became badly mired in the soft ground. Realizing he couldn’t get it out alone, he called to his neighbor for help, asking if he could spare his oxen and some men. But the neighbor, in a sour mood and feeling unkind, snapped back with reproaches, blaming the man for poor judgment. “Help yourself,” he said coldly, “and next time, think ahead.” With great effort and no small frustration, the man managed to free his team and carry on with his work, saying nothing more. A few days later, fortune turned. The churlish neighbor found himself in the same predicament—his own load stuck fast in the mire. Before he could even ask, the man he had refused came over without hesitation, bringing his oxen and offering the help that had been denied to him. The unkind neighbor was struck by the generosity. He felt deeply ashamed of how he had behaved. From that day forward, he never again refused his neighbor a favor.

## THE TWO STUDENTS

Two students at one of our universities had a small disagreement. One of them, a passionate young man from the South, felt insulted and started demanding satisfaction in line with Southern ideas of honor. But he was met with calm strength and kindness. The other student told his angry classmate that he could only offer a Christian response; that he truly hadn’t meant to insult or hurt him, and if he was shown to be in the wrong, he was ready to make things right. The Southerner, fired

up with pride, shouted angry insults and even threatened to beat him for his supposed cowardice. But the calm student stayed composed. He showed no fear or submission, faced the aggression with real courage, reminded his classmate that they had always been friends, and said he intended to stay that way, no matter how he was treated. He urged the Southerner to think about how unworthy his current attitude and behavior were. His calm words and demeanor had an impact. The Southerner's anger faded, replaced by embarrassment and regret. He stepped forward, reached out his shaking hand, and said, "I've acted like a fool. Can you forgive me?" "With all my heart," came the warm reply. They immediately embraced; the conflict was resolved, and from then on, they remained close friends. This story was shared by a respected Baptist minister after one of my talks on non-resistance; I believe he said he saw the event himself.

#### TWO NEIGHBORS AND THE MANURE.

Two of my former neighbors had a small dispute over a few loads of manure. One of them rented land from the other. The landlord had clearly stated in their agreement that he would keep all the manure from the stable, and in return had offered certain benefits to the tenant. However, since the tenant had bought and used a lot of hay from outside sources, he felt he deserved a share of the manure. He suggested they let some respected neighbors settle the matter as neutral judges. But the landlord refused to bring in others, saying they both knew what was fair and should settle it themselves. Still, the tenant managed to have two peaceful, well-respected neighbors nearby one day and, in their presence, strongly repeated his suggestion to have them decide the matter. The landlord, disheartened by the tenant's persistence, quickly responded, "I have nothing to bring before anyone. I've done my best to stick to our agreement and to treat you the way I'd want to be treated. God has given each of us a conscience to tell us what's right and wrong. If you truly believe it's right for you to take that manure, then go ahead—whenever you like. I promise I'll never bring it up or question you about it again." That settled it. The tenant realized he was in the wrong. The whole issue quietly faded away, and the calm, kind, and principled response of the landlord ended the conflict. This story was told to me by one of the neighbors who had been asked to help judge the situation. His personal remark was, "That was one of the best sermons I ever heard."

#### IMPOUNDING THE HORSE.

"A man angrily confronted his neighbor one afternoon and said, '*Listen! I found your horse loose on the road this morning and put him in the town pound—he's still there. If you want him back, go pay the fees and get him out. And let me warn you now: every time I find him wandering in the road, I'll do the same thing, and you'll have to pay for it.*' The neighbor calmly replied, '*Well, I saw your cows in my cornfield this morning while looking out my window. I chased them out and put them back into your pasture. And I'm*

*letting you know now that if I ever find them in my corn again, I'll do the same thing.'* The first man was humbled and made peace. He went to the pound, paid the fees, got the horse back, and returned him to his neighbor—along with a sincere apology for his bad temper." —*Anonymous*.

#### TWO NEIGHBORS AND THE HENS.

A man in New Jersey told Henry C. Wright the following story about himself and one of his neighbors: "I once owned a large flock of hens. I usually kept them enclosed, but one spring I decided to let them roam in my yard after clipping their wings so they couldn't fly. One day, when I came home for lunch, I found out that one of my neighbors had come by, furious, to tell me that my hens had gotten into his garden—and that he had killed several of them and thrown their bodies back into my yard. I was extremely angry. I loved those hens and was determined to get revenge—maybe even sue him or make him pay in some way. I sat down and ate lunch as calmly as I could. By the time I finished, I had cooled off a bit. I started to think it might not be worth it to go to war with my neighbor over hens and turn him into a lifelong enemy. I decided to try a different approach, thinking it would be wiser. After lunch, I went over to my neighbor's place. He was out in his garden. I found him chasing another one of my hens with a club, trying to kill it. I spoke to him. He turned to me, his face red with anger, and shouted, *'You've treated me terribly! I'll kill every one of your hens I can catch. I've never been so wronged—my garden is ruined!'* 'I'm really sorry about that,' I said. 'I didn't mean to harm you, and I realize now it was a mistake to let my hens roam free. I ask for your forgiveness, and I'm willing to pay you six times whatever damage they've caused.' The man was stunned. He didn't know what to say. He looked up at the sky, then down at the ground, and then at the poor hen he'd been chasing—and said nothing. I continued, 'Please, just tell me what the damage is, and I'll pay you six times over. And I promise, my hens will never bother you again. I value the friendship and goodwill of my neighbors too much to fight over hens or anything else.' *'I've been such a fool!'* said the neighbor. *'The damage isn't even worth mentioning. If anything, I should be compensating you—and asking for your forgiveness instead of the other way around.'*" —*Wright's Kiss for a Blow*.

#### HENRY AND ALBERT.

"I'm writing mainly to tell you a story about the power of love that happened in the family of an old friend of mine who has since passed away. Among his children, he left behind two sons: Henry, about twenty years old, and Albert, about sixteen. Albert had what people often call a bad, uncontrollable temper, which caused his mother a lot of stress. One day—probably in frustration—she told Henry to discipline him. Henry did as told, but Albert fought back and ended up being severely beaten. However, the beating didn't change Albert's attitude at all. In fact,

he swore he would never speak to Henry again—not until he was old enough to get revenge. For several months while he was still living at home, Albert kept his word and never said a single word to Henry. Eventually, he went off to sea and was gone for four or five years. But Albert had many good qualities. He saved money and, while his ship was being loaded and unloaded in faraway countries, he took the opportunity to explore the areas inland. He paid attention to what he saw and heard, learned a lot, and returned home a strong, athletic young man—clearly improved in many ways. He was friendly and open with the rest of the family, but still didn't say a word to Henry. By this time, Henry had become a Methodist preacher. Albert's coldness toward him was deeply painful. Eventually, Henry couldn't take it any longer. With tears in his eyes, he went to Albert and said, *'Albert, I can't live like this any longer. I can't bear your silence another hour. You once said that once you had whipped me, you'd speak to me again. Well, I'm ready for that now. Let's go to the barn. I'll take off my coat—I promise not to resist—and you can whip me for as long as you want. Then we can be friends again. I never would have hit you if Mother hadn't asked me to. I'm truly sorry I did.'* Albert had a strong spirit—he could handle physical pain—but he couldn't stand up to Henry's loving words. His pride melted instantly. He burst into tears. The two brothers immediately embraced. For a while, their emotions were too powerful for words. But soon, Albert apologized for what he had said all those years ago. And as far as I know, they became two of the most loving brothers in the entire county. To God—the God of peace—be all the glory." – *Letter from Alfred Wells in the Practical Christian.*

#### THE SUBDUED HATTER.

About nineteen or twenty years ago, when I was in the hat-making business, I hired a man named Jonas Pike from Massachusetts. He was an excellent hat maker. But he had a bad habit common among some workers at the time: he went on drinking sprees, which we called "trains." As a result, he rarely had decent clothes. After he got a job, Jonas would work very hard until he had earned about twenty, thirty, or even forty dollars' worth of clothing—because he always needed clothes when he started working. But once he got what he needed, he'd go on one of his drinking binges and sell every item of clothing he could, even if it only brought in six cents, and spend it all on whiskey. When everything was gone and he started to sober up, he'd become difficult. Sometimes he'd complain and yell, and other times he'd beg me to lend him a hat or something else he could sell to get more whiskey. When I refused, he'd get angry and threaten to beat me. I told him he could do it whenever he liked. But he'd say, "I won't do it in your shop. If I could get you outside, I'd beat you like a sack." After hearing this a few times, I walked out the door and said to him, "I'm outside now. You can hit me if you really want to." Jonas stepped out after me, charged up and ready to punch, and struck me in the chest. I calmly put my hand on my cheek and held it out to him, saying, "Now hit me here, Jonas." He stared at me in shock, then turned around and said, "Damn you, if you

won't fight, I'll leave you alone." He went back into the shop, sat down, and stayed quiet. He sobered up and returned to work. From that moment on, Jonas was affectionate, kind, and peaceful with me. I hired him several more times afterward, and he was always well-behaved and cooperative. – *Letter from Erastus Hanchett in the Practical Christian.*

#### THE REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIER.

"A beloved brother of mine, now passed away, once told me a story from his life that I think is worth sharing. He was a soldier in the American Revolution. After he returned, he became religious and came to believe that all wars and fighting went against the teachings of Jesus Christ. His strong beliefs stirred up the anger of a wicked man in the neighborhood, who vowed that when his son came home from the army, he would punish him.

Sure enough, when the son came back, the father spread such stories about my brother that it made the son furious. He went straight to my brother's house, angry and ready to fight. My brother tried to reason with him, doing everything he could to calm him down and stop the fight, but nothing worked. The young man was determined to fight.

'Well,' my brother said, *'if we must fight, let's not do it like animals in the house. Let's go out into the field.'*

The young man agreed, and they went outside. When they reached the field and the young man took off his shirt to get ready for the fight, my brother looked him in the eye and said,

*'You're a coward.'*

'Coward! Don't call me a coward!' the young man shouted.

*'Well, you're one of the biggest cowards I've ever seen.'*

'What do you mean by that?'

*'I mean you're a coward if you want to fight a man who won't fight back.'*

'What, you don't want to fight me?'

*'Not at all. You can do whatever you want, but I'm not going to lift a finger against you.'*

'Is that your principle?'

*'Yes, it is, and I'm sticking to it.'*

The young man's anger faded, and he lowered his arm.

'Then I'd rather cut off my arm than strike you,' he said.

They talked things through and parted as good friends." – *Non-Resistant.*

#### EX-PRESIDENT JEFFERSON AND THE COOPER'S SHOP.

"The following was shared many years ago by one of the people involved, who was a well-respected citizen of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, and has since passed away:



During Thomas Jefferson's presidency, two young men from Pennsylvania leased his merchant mill at Monticello. One of the terms of the lease was that Jefferson, as their landlord, would build them a cooper's shop (a workshop for making barrels) within a certain amount of time. Before long, Jefferson had to leave for Washington to attend Congress, and while he was busy with national affairs, he completely forgot about the shop. But the tenants hadn't forgotten—everyday needs reminded them of that promise in the lease. Eventually, they decided to just build the cooper's shop themselves and planned to charge the cost back to Jefferson. When the President returned home after his time away, they all met to settle a long-running account. They went through each item carefully, and everything was fine—except for the charge for the cooper's shop. Jefferson objected, saying that he would have built it himself using his own workers. They tried several times to settle things, but every time they got to the issue of the cooper's shop, they couldn't agree. The young men became increasingly passionate and frustrated, and instead of resolving things, the disagreement grew worse with each meeting.

At this point, the father of the young men came to visit. He was a calm, kind, and diplomatic man who understood people and how to manage conflict. When his sons told him about the disagreement with Jefferson, he asked them to let him handle it, saying he believed he could settle it peacefully. They agreed, and soon after, he met with Jefferson to review the account. Jefferson went over it and approved everything—except the charge for the shop. He said firmly that he wouldn't pay for it, for the reasons he'd already explained. Hearing this, the father calmly replied, *'Well, friend Jefferson, throughout my life I've always preferred to give in rather than argue.'* At that, Jefferson lowered his chin to his chest for a moment. Then, lifting his head, he said strongly, *'That's a good principle, Mr. Shoemaker—and I can follow it just as well as you can. Go ahead and include the charge for the cooper's shop.'* And just like that, the matter was settled. The two sides remained good friends for the rest of their lives. If more people adopted this same spirit—of seeking peace and letting go of conflict—it would resolve countless disputes, bring more happiness to individuals, and create greater harmony in society." – *Farmer's Cabinet*.

#### WILLIAM LADD AND NEIGHBOR PULSIFER.

The late William Ladd, known as the apostle of the peace movement, used to tell this story: "I had a beautiful field of grain growing on a farm I owned some distance from my main home. Every time I rode past, I saw my neighbor Pulsifer's sheep in the field, destroying my hopes for a harvest. These sheep were tall and nimble—like spaniels. They could jump over any fence, and no wall could keep them out. I complained to Pulsifer and sent several messages, but nothing changed. Maybe the sheep were kept out for a day or two, but their long legs and the appeal of my grain compared to the pasture next door brought them right back. One day I rode by and saw all the sheep in the field again. I got angry and told my workers to set the dogs on them—and if that didn't work, I'd pay them to shoot the sheep.



"I rode away, deeply upset. I wasn't as much of a peace advocate then as I later became, and I was full of rage. But suddenly, something clicked. I asked myself, *'Why don't you practice the peace principles you're always preaching?'* I thought about it carefully and decided on the best thing to do.

The next day I rode over to visit Pulsifer. He was outside chopping wood. *'Good morning, neighbor,'* I said. No reply. *'Good morning,'* I said again. He gave a grunt like a pig and didn't look up. I continued, *'I came to talk to you about the sheep.'* At that, he threw down his axe and shouted angrily, *'Aren't you the fine neighbor, telling your men to kill my sheep! I heard about it—imagine a rich man like you wanting to shoot a poor man's sheep!'*

*'I was wrong, neighbor,'* I said, *'but I can't let your sheep keep eating all my grain. So I came over to offer this: I'll take your sheep to my pasture at the main farm and let them stay with mine. In the fall, you can take them back. If any are missing, you can pick replacements from my entire flock.'* Pulsifer looked shocked. He didn't know what to say. Finally, he stammered, *'Squire, are you serious?'* *'Absolutely,'* I said. *'It's better for me to feed your sheep grass in my pasture than to lose my grain, and I see the fence won't hold them back.'*

After a moment, Pulsifer said, *'The sheep won't bother you again—I'll tie them up. But I'll tell you this: if someone talks about shooting, I know how to shoot too. But when people are kind and neighborly, I can be kind too.'* The sheep never came into my field again.

*'And friends,'* Father Ladd said to his audience, *'remember this: when you threaten harm, others will threaten you. When nations talk about war, other nations get ready to fight too. But love inspires love, and a desire for peace keeps peace alive. The only way to overcome evil is with good. There is no other way.'* — *Democratic Review*.

## CONCLUSION.

The examples just shared come from everyday life. Although they don't involve situations of extreme personal danger or miraculous escapes, they are still relevant and meaningful. They show how well Christian non-resistance fits with human nature in the many small and large conflicts that people face daily. These stories prove that non-resistance isn't unnatural or impractical. In fact, it is especially effective at calming and cleansing the anger and impulses that arise in human interactions. Even the most difficult people respond positively when this principle is applied. Those with better dispositions can avoid countless quarrels through it. Far from working *against* the natural instinct for self-preservation, it actually provides the most effective and reliable way to protect oneself and achieve the true goals of that instinct. More dramatic examples—those involving greater danger and clearer escapes—will be shared in the next chapter to support this even further.

In the meantime, I can hardly resist urging the reader to seriously consider this question: ► Isn't the principle of non-resistance the most Christian, the most reasonable, the most noble idea we could embrace? Isn't it perfectly suited to encourage peace on earth and good will among people? Isn't it exactly what our hurting, burdened human nature needs to be healed, restored, and led to its highest purpose? The more you explore this principle, the more sound and beautiful it will appear.

“O, when will man unshackled rise,  
From dross of earth refined –  
Read mercy in his neighbor's eyes.  
And be forever kind?”

## CHAPTER V.

### THE SAFETY OF NON-RESISTANCE.

Raymond the traveler – Agent of the Bible Society in Texas – The young man near Philadelphia – Robert Barclay and Leonard Fell – Archbishop Sharpe – Rowland Hill – Two methodist Non-Resistants – The two New Zealand chiefs – The Missionary and Arabs – A Christian tribe in Africa – The Moravian Indians – The Moravians of Grace Hill – The Shakers – The Native Americans and the Quaker family - The Inhabitants of the Ryukyu Islands – The Native Americans and the Quaker Meeting – The Christian town in the Tyrol – Captain Back-The Quaker-The Maylays – Jonathan Dymond-colony of Pennsylvania – The colony of Pennsylvania.

In the previous chapter, I tried to show that non-resistance is not against human nature, but actually aligns perfectly with its core principles. In this chapter, I aim to finish that argument by offering more evidence that non-resistance generally provides greater overall safety. I'll do this by sharing real-life stories and historical examples that show how non-resistance has worked in situations of serious danger. I'm not claiming that practicing non-resistance will *always* protect a person's life or physical safety, only that it *generally* will. Jesus, the apostles, and thousands of Christian martyrs were killed despite their non-resistance. And certainly, others in the future may still be harmed, abused, or even murdered, regardless of their peaceful stance. But exceptions don't disprove the general rule. Supporters of *deadly resistance* don't argue that their approach *always* guarantees safety—only that, on the whole, it does. Likewise, I don't claim that non-resistance always protects people, but I do argue that, in general, it's safer. Here lies the key issue: those who support violent resistance believe their approach leads to greater safety overall, even if it sometimes fails. I argue the opposite—that non-resistance, despite occasional failures, leads to greater safety overall. So, which side is correct? According to Dr. Dick, supporters of violent resistance have caused the deaths of 14 billion people. According to Mr. Burke, the number is 35 billion,<sup>1</sup> all since this approach was first adopted. Can non-resistance possibly result in more deaths than this? Could it lead to a greater loss of life and happiness? Clearly not. Even in the worst-case scenarios, losses under non-resistance wouldn't be more than one in a thousand by comparison. And if people committed to this principle for just a few centuries, it could bring an end to human violence across the globe. Now, let's explore why non-resistance is, above all, the safest path to follow.

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1 ChatGPT estimates that between 300 million and over 1 billion people have died as a result of violence throughout history, though exact numbers are impossible to determine. By comparison, approximately 120 billion people are thought to have lived on Earth in total—meaning that less than 1% of humanity has died due to violence.

## RAYMOND THE TRAVELLER.

Raymond, a well-known European traveler, gives the following account:

Speaking about the Spanish smugglers, he says: "These smugglers are as skillful as they are determined. They're constantly exposed to danger and are used to risking their lives. Their first instinct is always to shoot, and they would certainly seem frightening to most travelers—especially in remote places, where crimes go unwitnessed and the weak have no one to help them. As for me, traveling *alone and unarmed*, I have encountered them without worry and traveled with them without fear. We have little to fear from people who don't see us as a threat or feel jealous of us—and much to gain from those to whom we simply appeal on the basis of shared humanity. The laws of nature still apply even to those who've long since abandoned the laws of civil society. Though they may be at war with society, they are sometimes at peace with individuals. I've had assassins guide me through the mountain passes of Italy; I've been warmly welcomed by Pyrenean smugglers along their hidden trails. Had I been armed, they would have seen me as an enemy. Because I was unarmed, they all respected me. For this reason, I gave up carrying any kind of threatening gear long ago. Weapons may be useful against wild animals, but we must remember they're no protection against betrayal. They provoke the wicked and scare the innocent. Ultimately, a peaceful person among other human beings has a far more sacred defence—his character."

## AGENT OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY IN TEXAS.

"In the early part of 1833, or around that time, a Bible Society agent was traveling through Texas. His route took him through a wooded area, where two men were lying in wait with the intent to kill—one armed with a gun, the other with a large club. As he approached their hiding spot, they rushed toward him. But seeing that he didn't resist, they neither struck nor fired. He began to speak with them, reasoning calmly, and soon they seemed less eager to harm him. After a little while, he convinced them to sit with him on a log and talk things over more calmly. In the end, he even persuaded them to kneel with him in prayer. After that, they parted with him on friendly terms." —*Calumet*.

## THE YOUNG MAN NEAR PHILADELPHIA.

"A few years ago, a young man near Philadelphia was stopped one evening in a wooded area by someone demanding, '*Your money or your life.*' The robber pointed a pistol at his chest. The young man, carrying a large sum of money, calmly and deliberately began handing it over, while also speaking to the robber about the wrongness and danger of the path he was on. The young man's words cut the robber deeply. He became furious, cocked his pistol, held it to the young man's head, and

swore, *'Stop that preaching, or I'll blow your brains out.'* The young man calmly replied, *'Friend, I wouldn't risk my life to save my money, but I'm willing to die if it might save you from this destructive path. I won't stop pleading with you.'* He continued speaking the truth even more earnestly and gently. Before long, the pistol dropped to the ground, tears filled the robber's eyes, and he was overwhelmed. He returned all the money, saying, *'I can't rob a man with such principles.'* "

#### ROBERT BARCLAY AND LEONARD FELL.

Robert Barclay, the well-known defender of the Quakers, and Leonard Fell, also a member of that Society, were each attacked by highwaymen in England at different times. Both remained true to their principles of non-resistance, and both were notably victorious. A pistol was pointed at Barclay as a forceful demand was made for his money. Calm and composed, he looked the robber in the eye with a firm yet gentle kindness. He assured him that he was a friend to him and to all people, that he was willing and ready to help with his needs, and that he had no fear of death because of his faith in eternal life. Therefore, he could not be frightened by a deadly weapon. He then appealed to the robber's conscience, asking how he could bear to shed the blood of someone who only wished him well. The robber was stunned; his eyes softened, his strong arm began to shake, the pistol dropped to his side, and he fled from the presence of the peaceful man he could no longer face.

Fell was attacked far more violently. The robber charged at him, pulled him off his horse, searched his pockets, and threatened to shoot him if he offered any resistance. It all happened in an instant. But Fell remained calm. His beliefs gave him strength beyond the fear of man or death. Though ordered not to speak, he calmly and firmly rebuked the robber for his wickedness, warned him of the consequences of such a life, urged him to change his ways, and assured him that he forgave the unprovoked attack. He also said he hoped the man would choose an honest way of living for his own sake. His bold, sincere, and compassionate words touched the robber's heart. The man returned his money and his horse, and told him to go in peace. Then, with tears in his eyes, he cried out, "May God have mercy on a sinful wretch," and quickly disappeared.

#### ARCHBISHOP SHARPE.

"Archbishop Sharpe was attacked by a robber on the highway who pointed a pistol at him and demanded his money. The Archbishop responded by speaking to the man as a fellow human being and as a Christian. The robber was truly in desperate need, and the Archbishop gave him the money he had on him. He also promised that if the man came to the palace, he would make up the total to fifty

pounds—the amount the robber had said he desperately needed. The man did return to the palace and received the full amount.

"About a year and a half later, the same man came back again. This time, he returned the money. He explained that his situation had improved, and that because of the Archbishop's '*astonishing kindness*,' he had become '*the most penitent, the most grateful, and happiest of all people*.' The reader is invited to consider how different the Archbishop's feelings would have been if he had responded with violence and ended this man's life."— *Dymond*.

#### ROWLAND HILL.

I once came across a remarkable story about this well-known London preacher, but despite considerable searching, I've been unable to locate it among my papers. My memory of the details is incomplete, but the main points were as follows: Mr. Hill was returning from a trip outside the city when a man suddenly jumped out from the roadside, pointed a pistol at him, and demanded his money. Mr. Hill calmly studied the man's face with a look of compassion. While taking out his money, he commented that the man didn't look like someone naturally given to such violent acts, and said he feared that some extreme hardship had driven him to this crime. He also asked the man how much money he needed. The man was visibly moved. He admitted that this was his first offense and said he had only resorted to robbery because his family was in desperate need. Mr. Hill kindly expressed his sympathy and willingness to help. He gave the man a sum of money right then and there, and promised further assistance if he would come to his house. The robber was overcome with emotion. He thanked Mr. Hill humbly and quickly made his way toward the city. Wanting to know the full truth of the man's situation, Mr. Hill instructed his servant to follow him home. The servant did so and found that the man lived in a miserable dwelling on an obscure street, where his wife and children were on the brink of starvation. The man was seen stopping first at a bakery and then returning home with several loaves of bread. His wife received the food with both joy and astonishment, saying she hoped her dear husband had come by it through honest means. The children cried tears of joy as they began to satisfy their hunger, but the father looked somber and burdened. Out of kindness, Mr. Hill took the man and his family under his care. He provided them with a proper home and gave the man a job as his coachman. The man turned out to be remarkably honest and hardworking. Before long, he had a genuine religious conversion and joined Mr. Hill's church. For fifteen years, he lived a devout and upright life, earning the trust and respect of everyone who knew him. When he finally passed away, it was with a joyful hope in eternal life. Mr. Hill preached a moving funeral sermon in which, for the first time, he shared the story of the attempted robbery. He used the occasion to highlight the power of Christian patience, kindness, and compassion toward those who have done wrong. Here was a man rescued from a potentially disastrous path



and, by God's grace, transformed into a true child of God—an exemplary and beloved brother in Christ. How different the outcome might have been if Rowland Hill had chosen to respond with violence, or had used the same effort to turn him over to the authorities as he did to help him! Oh, how beautiful true righteousness is! How noble is Christian non-resistance! How safe!

## TWO METHODIST NON-RESISTANTS.

"The Rev. John Pomphret, an English Methodist minister, always advocated the *practical application* of the 'peace doctrine': *'If someone sues you for your coat, give him your cloak also; if someone compels you to go one mile, go with him two.'* He consistently said that if he were ever attacked by a highwayman, he would follow this principle in practice. He was also a cheesemonger by trade (he preached to *do good*, not for wages). One day, as he was returning from the market—having just collected a large amount of money from customers to restock his yearly cheese supply—he was approached by a robber. The man demanded his money and threatened to kill him if he refused. Rev. Pomphret calmly and kindly replied, *'Well, friend, how much do you want? I'll give it to you, and that way you can avoid committing a robbery.'* 'Will you really give me what I ask for?' the robber said. *'I will, as long as you don't ask for more than I have,'* answered the minister. 'Then I want fifteen pounds,' (about seventy-five dollars at the time *and three-thousand dollars in 2025*). Pomphret counted out the exact sum and handed it over—in gold, rather than banknotes. Had he given banknotes, their serial numbers could have been traced, and the robber could have been caught when trying to spend them. He explained this to the man and said, *'Unfortunate man, I give you this money freely. Go home, pay your debts, and from now on, earn your living honestly.'*

"Years passed. Eventually, the preacher received a letter from the same man. It contained the *full amount* he had taken, *plus interest*. The letter also included a humble confession. The former robber wrote that Pomphret's words had awakened his sleeping conscience, which gave him no rest until he had made both restitution and confession, and changed his life completely."

Reader! Conscience is a stronger force than fear; and harder to silence. Precautions might make a criminal feel safe, but conscience cannot be so easily dismissed, nor can its protest be silenced by thoughts of avoiding capture. Punishment appeals to physical fear, which precautions can calm—but if we nurture and guide the consciences of children, and hold adults morally accountable, real transformation can happen. Reader! *You* decide: isn't this a fundamental *law of the mind*?

The Rev. Mr. Ramsay, another Methodist minister, lived entirely on the quarterly donations from his congregation—just enough, with strict budgeting, to support his family. One night, after preaching six miles away from home (a distance too great to return that night, especially in stormy weather), two robbers broke into his house. Only women were home—Mrs. Ramsay and her sister. The robbers woke the women and demanded to know where the money was. Mrs. Ramsay, in her nightgown, lit a candle, calmly walked to the bureau where the donation was stored, retrieved the key, unlocked the drawer, and showed them the money wrapped in a handkerchief. She said, “This is all we have to live on. It is the Lord’s money. But if you are going to take it, there it is.” With that, she left them and returned to bed. The next morning, they found the money untouched—down to the last cent. Here again, *conscience* was appealed to—and once more, it prevailed.—*Fowler’s Phrenological Journal*.

#### THE TWO NEW ZEALAND CHIEFS.

This powerful story involves two prominent individuals in New Zealand—one from the Ngāpuhi tribe and the other from the town of Ōtūmoetai. The account, which reveals truly elevated behavior in men once regarded as irredeemable savages, comes from the Rev. Messrs. Taylor and Wilson, who were missionaries among them. It is taken from the Church of England Missionary Register of January 1841. Who could read this without hoping that all of our countrymen recently settled in New Zealand might adopt such a genuinely Christian spirit when resolving conflicts—and leave behind the warlike practices that, to Christianity’s shame, are still common in Europe and other places, even among those who claim to follow the Savior, the *Prince of Peace*?

When the Ngāpuhi tribe came to attack the town of the Ōtūmoetai chief, the chief went out early one morning to scout their camp. While hiding in the fern, he saw the leading chief of the enemy approaching with a similar intent. Though the enemy chief was well armed, the Ōtūmoetai chief carried no weapons. Still, he stayed hidden, watching, until he saw the man sit down on the shore some distance away with his back turned. At that moment, the Ōtūmoetai chief crept forward silently. Then, springing like a tiger, he seized the enemy chief, flipped him over, took his mere (a traditional weapon), disarmed him of his double-barreled gun, tied his hands behind his back, and marched him toward his own town as a prisoner. When they neared the town, the Ōtūmoetai chief suddenly stopped and told the prisoner to stand still. The captured chief, assuming he was about to be executed, braced for the worst. But instead, the Ōtūmoetai chief untied his hands, gave back his weapons, and said: “Now you bind me, and lead me to your camp as your prisoner.” The enemy chief complied. When they arrived at his camp, the people burst into cheers, seeing their leader bring in such a high-value prisoner. It was all the chief could do to prevent them from killing the man on the spot. But the Ngāpuhi chief raised his hand and said, “Wait until you hear the full story of how he treated me when he had

the chance to kill me but chose not to.” The people agreed and sat in a circle around them. The story was then told in full—how the Ōtūmoetai chief had overpowered his enemy, captured him, and yet showed mercy by setting him free and offering himself in exchange. The crowd was deeply moved. Admiration for the prisoner spread among them. And then something remarkable happened: they declared immediate peace between the two groups. *Should not all Christians pray that the same spirit might guide our own hearts and actions?—Tract of London Peace Society.*

## THE MISSIONARY AND ARABS.

Mr. King, a respected missionary in Palestine, describes a remarkable example of how peaceful conduct helped save his life and the lives of many others when they were attacked by a large group of Arabs on the plain of Esdraelon. Mr. King's group had lost a trunk, which they believed had been stolen by some Arabs. As a result, they captured two Arabs and tied them up with ropes, thinking they were the thieves. They took the men with them on their journey, despite Mr. King's objections. Before long, the whole group was attacked by a band of Arabs who freed their captured companions. Panic spread quickly. When one member of the party prepared to fire at the Arabs, Mr. King objected, and others stepped in just in time to prevent violence. Soon, every part of the caravan was under attack, and Mr. King later recounted:

“This was no time for negotiation. Everything was in chaos. No one knew if they were about to live or die. Death, however, seemed likely. Eventually, our baggage was cut off from us. There appeared to be a brief pause in the Arabs’ attack, and I hoped that, satisfied with taking our possessions, they would let us go unharmed. But within moments, I saw them coming at us again. I thought that everything was probably lost and that, having taken our goods, they now planned to take our lives. It was a dreadful moment. All I could say was, *‘Heaven defend us.’*”

“I was at the front of the caravan, slightly ahead, when an Arab sheikh came charging at me on his horse with a large club in hand. As he approached, I stopped and spoke to him, calling him *‘brother,’* and said, *‘Please do me no harm—I have not wronged you.’*”

“I spoke to him with peace and gentleness. At that, he lowered the club he had been waving, paused, listened, and soon turned away. Not long after, I saw him driving back some of our attackers, and we heard the cry of *ayman* (safety), which I don’t need to say was a very welcome sound.

“To my surprise, our baggage was also soon allowed to proceed. The attack had been fierce, and the Arabs acted as if they were ready to fight to the death to get what they wanted. I have no doubt that if even one of their men had been killed by us, it would have triggered the massacre of our entire group.”

## A CHRISTIAN TRIBE IN AFRICA.

The following interesting incident is taken from "Moffat's Southern Africa." It happened in a remote village of native Africans, whose inhabitants had received Christian teachers and were just beginning to leave behind their former state of barbarism:

"This small Christian group had gathered on a Sunday morning with the villagers, in the center of the village, to hold an early prayer meeting before the day's services began. They had barely sat down when a group of marauders approached from the interior. They had gone there to plunder, but failing to find what they wanted, they decided to attack this village on their way back.

"Moshen, the chief, stood up and asked the people to remain seated and trust in Jehovah while he went out to meet the marauders. When he asked them what they wanted, the terrifying reply was, '*Your cattle, and it will be at your own risk if you raise weapons to resist.*' '*There are my cattle,*' the chief responded, then returned to his place and resumed the prayer meeting. A hymn was sung, a chapter was read, and then everyone knelt to pray to God, the only one who could save them in their time of trouble.

"The scene was too sacred and solemn for such a band of ruffians to witness; they all left without taking a single thing belonging to the people."

## THE MORAVIAN NATIVE AMERICANS.

A small tribe of Native Americans in the West had been converted by the Moravian Missionaries to their faith, which includes the belief that Christians cannot justifiably fight, even to save their own lives. Some time later, this peaceful little tribe was thrown into great alarm and distress when they learned that a much larger tribe to the North was planning a hostile attack against them. They turned to their Moravian teachers for advice. They could not see how they could possibly avoid fighting under such circumstances. They feared total destruction if they did not resist. They were lovingly and earnestly encouraged to remain faithful to their principles and to trust in God. They were told about the larger numbers of the hostile tribe, and how uncertain their fate would be if they relied on deadly weapons. They were advised to choose a few of their oldest men as a delegation and provide them with gifts of choice foods and other items their means allowed. This respected delegation, entirely unarmed except for their baskets of roasted corn, fruits, and the like, was to go out and meet the enemy some distance from the village. Meanwhile, those who stayed behind were to pray together, asking the Father of spirits for protection. The advice was accepted, faithfully followed, and successfully carried out. The hostile Native Americans were approaching their defenseless targets. The old men, carrying their simple but meaningful gifts, went

out to meet them. The invaders, surprised and moved by the sight, stopped in shock, their tomahawks lowered. When the delegates reached the front lines, the enemy parted as if by magic and allowed them through to the presence of their commanding chief, Sachem. His respect was immediately won by the elders' age and humility. He accepted their gifts, listened to their peaceful message, declared his friendship, and sent them back with promises that his tribe would do them no harm. He also declared that if anyone attacked them, he and his people would protect them. Thus, these truly Christian Native Americans escaped the threatened harm entirely and settled back in their homes, surrounded by a protection that only these divine principles and their perfect Author could provide.

#### THE MORAVIANS OF GRACE HILL.

During the rebellion in Ireland in 1793, it is said that the rebels had long planned an attack on the Moravian settlement at Grace Hill, Wexford County. Finally, to carry out their threats, a large group of them marched toward the town. But the Moravians, true to their principles during this difficult time, did not confront them with weapons; instead, they gathered in their place of worship and prayed to Jehovah to be their shield and protector in this hour of danger. The hostile groups, who had expected armed resistance, were amazed by such an unexpected and powerful sight. They heard the prayers and praises of the Moravians and listened to the pleas made on *their own behalf*. After lingering in the streets for a whole day and night, they all agreed to turn away and leave without harming a single person.

#### THE SHAKERS.

"The Shakers, too, have experienced the protection that peaceful principles always provide. Around the year 1812, the people of Indiana were troubled by raids from the Native Americans; but the Shakers living in that area, though they had no soldiers and no weapons, seemed completely safe while the destruction was happening all around them. Someone once asked a leading chief why the Native Americans did not attack and harm the Shakers like they did others. He replied, '*We warriors meddle with a peaceful people! That people, we know, will not fight. It would be a disgrace to hurt such a people.*'" — *The Friend of Peace*.

#### THE NATIVE AMERICANS AND THE QUAKER FAMILY.

An intelligent Quaker from Cincinnati told me the following story as proof that the principle of non-resistance has a strong effect—even on Native Americans. During the last war, a Quaker lived among the residents of a small settlement on the western frontier. When the Native Americans began their devastating attacks, every resident fled to more central settlements—except for the Quaker and his family. He



chose to stay and rely entirely on the simple principle of disarming his enemies through complete trust and kindness. One morning, he saw from his window a line of Native Americans emerging from the forest and heading toward his house. He immediately went out to meet them and extended his hand to the leader of the group. But neither the leader nor the others acknowledged him—they entered his home and searched it for weapons. If they had found any, they likely would have killed everyone in the family. But there were none, and they calmly ate the food he offered them, then left peacefully. At the edge of the forest, he noticed they stopped and seemed to be having a discussion. Soon, one of them left the group and ran back toward the house. When he arrived, he placed a simple white feather above the door and then returned to the group, who all disappeared into the forest. From that moment on, the white feather protected him from future attacks. Whenever a new party came by and saw it, they took it as a sign of peace. In this case, we see that the law of kindness even softened fierce enemies—the white feather signaled to their fellow tribesmen that the Quaker was a follower of Penn, and a friend to their people.—*Montgomery's Law of Kindness*.

#### THE INHABITANTS OF THE RYUKYU ISLANDS.

These islands are located near the Chinese Sea. They have been visited by several explorers, including Captain Basil Hall. He reports that the inhabitants have no forts, warships, garrisons, weapons, or soldiers, and seem entirely unfamiliar with the art of war. They are kind, hospitable, polite, honest, and possess knowledge of some mechanical arts. So, what has been their fate? Based on the reckless assumptions of our opponents, one might expect their total destruction. But have they been destroyed? Quite the opposite. They have remained in peace, safety, and happiness. "The olive branch" is planted on their shores, and they live beneath it, "no man daring to make them afraid." – *McCree*.

#### THE NATIVE AMERICANS AND THE QUAKER MEETING.

I came across the following story somewhere, though I can't now recall exactly where. In western New York or Pennsylvania, during a time of conflict with Native American tribes, a community of Quakers had built a log meeting house and continued to gather there regularly according to the customs of their Society. They had been invited and urged to take refuge under the protection of the army and its fortifications. But they refused to compromise their principles by showing any reliance on military defense. As a result, they were left exposed to potential attacks from any roaming band of warriors along that frontier. One day, while they were gathered in silent worship in their simple meeting house, a group of Native Americans suddenly approached, painted and armed for battle. They passed back and forth in front of the open door, looking curiously inside and around the



building. After taking time to observe the calm worshippers, they eventually entered quietly and joined them. The principal Quakers greeted them with outstretched hands of peace and offered them seats, which the visitors took and occupied in respectful silence until the meeting concluded in its usual way. Afterward, the Quakers invited them to a nearby home, where they were warmly welcomed and given food and rest. Before leaving, the Native chief took his host aside and assured him that he and his people would be completely safe from any attacks by his people. He said, "When we first came here, we intended to kill every white man we found. But when we saw white men without guns or weapons, so quiet, so peaceful, worshipping the Great Spirit, the Great Spirit spoke to the Indian's heart—'*Do not harm them, do not harm them!*'" With that, he gave a final friendly handshake and departed with his group—off to find the kind of white man whose reliance on deadly weapons invited destruction.

#### THE CHRISTIAN TOWN IN THE TYROL.

The following is a beautiful excerpt from one of Lydia Maria Child's letters to the Boston Courier. I recommend it not just as a pleasant read—which it certainly is—but as something for most serious *consideration*:

"Today is Christmas. From East to West, from North to South, people sing hymns of praise to the once-despised Nazarene and kneel in worship before his cross. How beautiful is this universal tribute to the principle of love—the feminine force in the universe, the very heart of Christianity. It is this divine idea that sets Christianity apart from all other religions, and yet it's the very idea in which Christian nations show so little genuine faith, that one might think they keep the gospel only to swear by, despite its command: '*Swear not at all.*'

"Centuries have passed, and through endless conflict have brought about our brief moment of history—but is there peace and goodwill among people? True faith in Jesus's words would quickly fulfill the prophecy sung by angels. But the world keeps insisting, '*This teaching of unconditional forgiveness and perfect love, while beautiful and holy, can't actually be practiced today; people aren't ready for it.*' The same kind of thinking says, '*It wouldn't be safe to free the slaves; they must first be prepared for liberty.*' As if slavery *could ever* prepare people for freedom, or war *could ever* lead nations into peace! Yet those who say these things with a straight face are the same ones who laugh at the foolishness of a timid mother who says her son shouldn't go into the water until he has learned to swim.

"Those who have had the courage to trust in the principles of peace have always found them completely safe. And it can never be otherwise—so long as it is clear that this path is taken because of Christian conviction and sincere goodwill toward humanity. Who would seem less likely to understand this than the Native

Americans of North America? Yet how willingly they laid down their tomahawks and scalping knives at the feet of William Penn! And how humbly they expressed sorrow for killing the only three Quakers they were ever known to harm! *'The men carried weapons,'* they said, *'so we didn't realize they weren't fighters. We thought they were pretending to be Quakers, because they were cowards.'* The same excuse came from the Eastern tribes who killed Lyman and Munson. *'They carried weapons,'* they said, *'so we assumed they weren't Christian missionaries, but enemies. We wouldn't have hurt them if we had known they were men of God.'*

"If any nation could rise to the wisdom of renouncing war and publicly declaring to the world, *'We will not fight under any circumstances; if another nation has a grievance with us, we'll resolve it through impartial arbitrators mutually agreed upon'*—do you really think any nation would dare to attack such a people? No, absolutely not. They would instinctively be ashamed to do so, just as people are now ashamed to attack women or children. Even if someone could be found despicable enough to try it, the entire civilized world would cry out in outrage and, by universal agreement, label them as cowards and murderers. And murderers they would be, even by the usual definition of the word. I once read about a certain regiment ordered to march into a small town (in the Tyrol, I believe) and take *control* of it. As it happened, the town was inhabited by a colony of Christians who lived out their faith through their actions. A messenger from a nearby village warned them that troops were coming. They simply replied, *'If they want to take it, then take it they will.'* Soon the soldiers came riding in, flags waving and fifes blaring their shrill challenge. But instead of resistance, they saw the farmer at his plow, the blacksmith at his forge, and the women at their churning and spinning wheels. Babies laughed at the music, and boys ran out to see the brightly dressed soldiers—the 'harlequins of the nineteenth century.' Of course, none of these people looked like proper targets to shoot at. *'Where are your soldiers?' the officers asked. 'We have none,'* came the simple answer. *'But we've come to take the town.'* *'Well then, friends, the town is right here in front of you.'* *'But is there no one here to fight?'* *'No, we are all Christians.'* This was a situation military training had not prepared them for. This was a form of resistance no bullet could harm—a fortress that was entirely immune to attack. The commander was bewildered. *'If there's no one to fight, then we can't fight,'* he said. *'It's impossible to conquer a town like this.'* So he gave the order to turn the horses around, and the troops left the village just as they had arrived—without bloodshed, and perhaps a little wiser.

"This small-scale example shows how easy it would be to do away with armies and navies—if only people truly believed in the religion they claim to follow. When France recently reduced its army, England quickly did the same—because the existence of one army always creates the supposed need for another, unless people are safely shielded inside the kind of spiritual stronghold described above."

## CAPT. BACK - THE QUAKERS - THE MALAYS.

I make no apology for adding the following excerpts from another article by the same insightful and inspiring author:

"It's a purpose worth living for if I can contribute in any small way to convincing people that the Christian principle of overcoming evil with good isn't just a beautiful sentiment—something nice for the religious to wear like pearls on a maiden's chest—but that it's actually the highest form of reason, the bravest expression of true courage, the most far-reaching philosophy, and the wisest kind of political economy.

"There seems to be more than enough evidence to believe that practicing peace principles is always safe—even with the most savage people and in the most dangerous situations—so long as it's clearly understood that such actions come from conviction, not cowardice.

"When Captain Back went to the Arctic in search of his friend Captain Ross, he encountered a group of Inuit who had never seen a white man before. Their chief raised a spear to throw at the stranger, but when Captain Back calmly approached without any weapons, the spear dropped, and the so-called native gladly welcomed the man who had trusted him. If Captain Back had followed the usual advice to carry weapons in such situations, he might have brought about his own death and that of his companions."

Perhaps the greatest test of peace principles came during the Irish Rebellion of 1798. In that violent conflict, Irish Quakers were caught between two dangerous sides. The Protestant establishment distrusted them because they wouldn't fight or pay military taxes. The insurgents—angry Catholic nationalists—considered it a death-worthy offense that the Quakers wouldn't adopt the Catholic faith or fight for Irish independence. As victories alternated between the two sides, both often treated neutrals as enemies. It was a dangerous time for everyone, but the Quakers were especially vulnerable, threatened by both camps. Anticipating the coming storm, they had destroyed all their guns and hunting weapons nearly two years before the rebellion began. But even that public pledge of peace wasn't enough for the government, which demanded military service. The Quakers faced threats and insults from every direction. Still, they stuck to their commitment: they would help both sides by doing good, and they would harm no one. Their homes became sanctuaries for widows, orphans, the wounded, and the dying—whether loyalists or rebels. Sometimes, victorious insurgents would discover Protestant refugees in Quaker homes and threaten to kill them if they weren't turned out. But the Quakers responded gently: "Friend, do what thou wilt, I will not harm thee or any other human being." Confronted with such calm bravery, the attackers couldn't follow through. They realized this wasn't cowardice—it was a deeper kind of courage.

In one case, a rebel threatened to burn a Quaker's home unless he expelled the Protestant women and children sheltering there. The man replied, "I can't do that. As long as I have a home, it will remain open to help the helpless, no matter which side they're on. If my house is burned, I will be turned out with them and share their suffering." The rebel backed down and left the man in peace.

In another case, the Protestant authorities captured the Quaker schoolmaster of Ballitore, claiming he had no right to live in peace while they risked their lives defending the country. "Friends," he said, "I never asked anyone to fight for me." They dragged him off anyway, saying he could at least "stop a bullet." His house and school were full of refugees—because throughout the entire war, *Quaker homes were the only safe places*. Some of the women pleaded with the soldiers not to take the man who had cared so much for others. He told them, "Don't be distressed, my friends. I forgive these neighbors. They act in ignorance of my beliefs. They may take my life, but they cannot force me to harm another soul." As with the rebels before, the Protestants finally walked away, unable to harm the man of peace, protected as he was by his faith.

Of course, civil war only added fuel to the fire of religious hatred. In one case, insurgents captured an elderly, frail Quaker and threatened to shoot him unless he agreed to be baptized by a Catholic priest. They hadn't gone far before the man collapsed from exhaustion. "What do you say to our demand?" one asked, weapon in hand. The old man quietly replied, "If you are allowed to take my life, I pray our Heavenly Father will forgive you." After a brief conversation among themselves, the soldiers let him go—restrained by a force they couldn't understand.

Kindness added strength to gentle words. Soldiers from both factions had seen their comrades cared for by the Quakers, or watched mothers and children fed, or witnessed broken families given refuge. No matter who won a village, the cry would go up: "Spare the Quakers! They've helped everyone and harmed no one." While towns burned and blood flowed, the homes of the peacemakers stood untouched.

It's worth recording that in the midst of all this bloodshed, in counties with large Quaker populations, only one Quaker was killed. That one man had been afraid to trust peace principles. He dressed in a military uniform and sought protection at a garrison, which was soon overrun by rebels—and he was killed. "His dress and arms spoke the language of hostility," wrote a historian, "and therefore invited it."

A few years ago, I rode in a stagecoach near Hartford and spoke with an older man whose words made me reflect on the cruelty that often hides behind the so-called glory of war. His right thumb hung limp, like it was suspended by a thread. When someone asked about it, he replied, "A Malay woman cut the muscle with her saber."

"A Malay woman!" they exclaimed. "How did you end up fighting a woman?"

"I didn't know she was a woman—they all dress the same there," he said. "I was on the ship U.S. Potomac, sent to punish the Malays for killing the crew of a Salem ship. We attacked one of their forts and killed over 200 people. Many of them were women. I can tell you, Malay women fight just as fiercely as the men."

After a few more comments about the battle, he paused and added with a sigh: "That was a bad business. I wish I hadn't been part of it. I've been a sailor my whole life, and I know the Malays well. They're brave and honest. If you deal fairly with them, they'll treat you well and can be trusted with gold. It was the Americans who were at fault. The truth is, Christian nations usually start these conflicts with so-called 'uncivilized' peoples." He then explained the origin of the violence: a Salem ship went to Malacca to trade for pepper. They made an agreement with the locals, who eagerly gathered the pepper and allowed the American sailors to help. The sailors left baskets full of pepper in the fields, promising to return for them the next day—but that night, they stole the pepper and sailed off without paying. When the next American ship arrived, the Malays demanded compensation. The Americans promised the matter would be addressed—but nothing was done. Later, another Salem captain pulled the same trick and stole even more. The outraged Malays finally took revenge by killing a different American crew. The U.S. sent the Potomac to retaliate—and they slaughtered 200 people. "I sometimes think our revenge was no more rational or Christian than theirs," he concluded.

I asked him, "What sort of revenge would be truly Christian?"

He hesitated. "That's a hard question to answer," he said. "I never felt right about that fight. I wouldn't have killed her if I'd known she was a woman."

I asked, "Why do you regret killing a woman more than killing a man?"

"I'm not sure," he answered. "I guess because women usually don't fight, and something in a man's heart makes him ashamed to hit back. It feels mean and cowardly. You just can't get yourself to do it."

I replied, "Then if one nation refused to fight, others couldn't bring themselves to attack either. What if a whole nation appealed to that instinct you say is inside every man?"

"I believe other nations would be ashamed to attack such a people," he said. "It would strip war of all its glory and thrill. Even the toughest soldier would recoil from it as if it were cold-blooded murder."

"That kind of peace policy would be cheap—and beautiful," I said. And with that, we parted ways.



## JONATHAN DYMOND - COLONY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

I shall ease my mind, and hopefully enlighten my readers, by ending this chapter with a somewhat lengthy excerpt from the essays of Jonathan Dymond. It comes from the third essay, under the section titled "*The Probable Practical Effects of Adhering to the Moral Law in Respect to War.*" It is extremely relevant, clear, and persuasive. He writes:

"We must never forget that our apparent interests in this life are sometimes, in God's plan, made secondary to our interests in the life to come. Yet, even if we consider only our present existence, I believe experience shows that forbearance is actually more beneficial to us. There is practical truth in the saying, '*When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies be at peace with him.*'"

"Anyone familiar with American history will recall that in the early 1700s, a scattered and terrifying war was waged by Native Americans against the European settlers. This war was provoked—like most such wars—by the harm and violence inflicted by so-called Christians. The attacks were sudden and secretive. The Indigenous people sometimes ambushed settlers along roads or in fields, shooting them without warning. Sometimes they attacked homes, scalping some and killing others in brutal ways. In response to this terrifying violence, the settlers sought safety by leaving their homes and retreating to forts or areas near military protection. Those who still had to travel outside these protected areas armed themselves for self-defense. But during this time of horror and widespread fear, the *Religious Society of Friends* (Quakers), who made up a significant portion of the population, remained true to their beliefs. They refused to go to forts or arm themselves. They stayed in the countryside, while others fled to garrisons. They continued working in the fields and living in their homes without carrying weapons for attack or defense. And what happened to them? They lived in safety and peace. The homes that were scenes of murder and violence for their armed neighbors were places of calm for the unarmed Quakers. *Three* Quakers, however, were killed. Who were they? They were three who abandoned their principles. Two were men who, in the simple words of the storyteller, 'used to go to their work without weapons, trusting in the Almighty and relying on His providence to protect them (as it was their belief not to use weapons to harm others or defend themselves). But when a *spirit of distrust* took hold of them, they picked up weapons. The Native Americans, who had seen them many times without arms and left them alone—saying they were peaceful and harmed no one—now saw them with guns, assumed they meant to kill them, and so shot them dead.' The third was a woman '*who had stayed in her home, not believing she had the right to go to a fortified place for protection, nor to take her son, daughter, and small children there. But eventually, she gave in to fearful thoughts and told her children to go with her to a nearby fort. She went—and soon after, the violent, cruel Indians ambushed and killed her along the way.*'"



“The Quakers’ experience during the Irish Rebellion was very similar. That rebellion was marked not only by open warfare but also by calculated, cold-blooded killings, fueled by intense religious hatred and a desire for revenge. Yet the Quakers were famously unharmed. When strangers passed through devastated towns and saw a house standing untouched, they would sometimes say, ‘*That must be a Quaker’s house.*’ Their survival was so complete that the Society officially recorded, ‘No member of our Society was killed, except one young man—and he had joined the military and taken up arms.’

“It is useless to argue, in the face of these facts, that they are exceptions to a general rule. The ‘exception’ is in choosing to *try* non-resistance—not in its *success*. It is also pointless to claim that the Native Americans or the rebels of Ireland spared the Quakers only because they had a *reputation* for being peaceful, or because the Quakers had previously won them over with *kindness*. We agree with that entirely—it’s exactly the point we’re making. We argue that *consistently and sincerely* living by the peaceful teachings of Christianity *becomes a protection for those who live that way*. We firmly believe there is no reason why the Quakers’ safety wouldn’t also apply to anyone else who acted the same. No one can give a valid reason why, if their numbers were multiplied ten times or a hundred times, they wouldn’t still have been protected. If someone believes such a reason exists, let them state it. The American and Irish Quakers were to their communities what one nation would be to a continent. So we challenge supporters of war to provide something that has never been provided—a reason to think that while individuals were protected by their peacefulness, an entire nation committed to peace would be destroyed. We’re not claiming that if an average people, in the usual state of human emotion, were suddenly attacked and decided on the spot to trust Providence and refuse to fight, that they would all be protected or that no one would be killed. But we are saying that history shows that people who consistently follow Christianity’s teachings in their relationships with others—and who steadfastly refuse, no matter the consequences, to take part in violence—*will be protected in their peacefulness*. And it doesn’t matter to the argument whether we credit that protection to God’s direct intervention or to the effect such behavior has on other people.”

Such has been the experience of individuals who are innocent and refuse to resist violence. A *national* example of this kind of refusal to bear arms has only happened once in history—but that one example proved, as far as political circumstances allowed, everything that human compassion could hope for, and everything that doubt could ask for, in support of our argument.

## THE COLONY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

“It has been,” he says, “the usual practice of those who have colonized distant lands to force their way in—or to hold their position—by the sword. One of their first goals has typically been to build a fort and organize a military force. The settlers became soldiers, and the colony turned into a military outpost. But Pennsylvania was different. It was settled by people who believed that war was completely incompatible with Christianity, and who therefore decided not to engage in it. Since they had resolved not to fight, *they kept no soldiers and owned no weapons*. They settled in a region surrounded by Indigenous people—Indigenous people who knew the settlers were unarmed. If being easy to conquer or defenseless could invite attack, then the Pennsylvanians should have been completely vulnerable to violence. Raiders could have plundered them without facing any retaliation, and armies could have massacred them without resistance. If anyone presented a clear opportunity for violence, it was these people. *Yet they were the ones who lived in safety, while those around them feared for their lives*. Their land was peaceful, while every other was caught up in war. The conclusion is inescapable, however surprising it may seem: they didn’t need weapons, *because they had no intention of using them*.”

These Native groups were certainly willing to commit violence against other colonies. They often brought destruction and bloodshed—the kind you’d expect from people who hadn’t been softened by civilization or restrained by religion. ‘But whatever conflicts the Pennsylvania Indians had with others, they consistently respected—and treated as sacred—the lands of William Penn. The Pennsylvanians never lost a single man, woman, or child to them. That’s something neither Maryland nor Virginia could claim—nor could the large colony of New England.’

The peace and safety Pennsylvania enjoyed wasn’t just a brief accident of history. It lasted ‘for more than seventy years,’ during which the colony lived among six Native nations—without even maintaining a militia for defense.

I can’t say I’m surprised that these people weren’t attacked, even though their peace was extraordinary and without precedent. There’s something profoundly noble in their trust in the Supreme Protector, in their total rejection of fear, and in their voluntary decision to give up any means of harming or defending. I’m not surprised that even fierce opponents were disarmed by such virtue. A people willingly living without weapons in the midst of warrior nations—who would attack them? There are few people so depraved that they wouldn’t respect such trust. It would take a rare kind of wickedness not to be moved by it.

And when was Pennsylvania’s safety finally broken, its peace disrupted? It was when the original leaders—*who had refused to engage in war—were outvoted in the legislature; when those who believed that the sword offered more security than Christian principles took control*. From that moment, the Pennsylvanians shifted their trust from

Christian nonviolence to armed defense—and *from that moment to the present, they have experienced war.*

This, then, is the evidence—drawn from a national example—of what happens when a Christian approach to war is fully embraced. Here we have a people who absolutely refused to fight, and who made themselves incapable of resistance by refusing to own weapons. Yet theirs was the land—surrounded by conflict and violence—that was chosen as a place of safety and peace. The only national example that Christian virtue has ever given us to test whether it is safe to rely on God for protection has proven that it is.”

## CHAPTER VI.

### GENERAL OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

1. Impracticable until the millennium – Principles of the millennium – Extracts from Professor Upham – 2. Extremely difficult if not impossible – Hollowness of the objection – Battle at the passage of the Traun in Austria – 3. More difficulty in small than large matters – Illustrations: The profane swearer reprov'd and subdued – The Christian slave and his enemy – How to overcome evil – Henry C. Wright and his assailant – The victorious little boy – Colony of Practical Christians – The avenger stayed – Conclusion.

This chapter will focus on addressing and refuting several common objections to the doctrine of Christian non-resistance.

#### OBJECTION I. IMPRACTICABLE TILL THE MILLENIUM.

"Your doctrine may be sound in principle and in its ultimate demands, but it seems unworkable until the arrival of the millennium. *Then*—when the entire human race has been spiritually renewed—will its lofty morality naturally arise from every heart. Given the current state of the world, with so much moral corruption and so many people driven by aggression, it's clearly impractical. If the righteous were to live by non-resistance now, the wicked would soon wipe them out."

**ANSWER.** I assert exactly the opposite: that the righteous would, in the truest sense, overcome the wicked if they fully lived out strict non-resistant principles. By doing so with sincere and unwavering faithfulness, they would immediately usher in the blessings of the millennium. How else can we imagine such a state ever becoming a reality among humanity? Will it arrive arbitrarily or by mechanical means? Will it appear suddenly, "with observation," <sup>1</sup> as the result of some grand miracle? Isn't the kingdom of heaven said to be "within" and "among" people—destined, like yeast hidden in dough, to spread and transform the whole? Shouldn't each true Christian's heart be a seed of the millennium, and every Christian community a kind of miniature version of it? If not, what evidence do we have that people have been born again—that *regeneration* <sup>2</sup> is real? If, while claiming

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 17:20 (KJV).

<sup>2</sup> "Regeneration" is the act of God making a sinner spiritually alive, beginning a new moral and spiritual life. In Catholic teaching, this typically happens at baptism, when original sin is washed away and new life in Christ begins. In many Protestant traditions—especially among Evangelicals and Reformed groups—regeneration is seen as being "born again," often linked to a personal response of faith and the work of the Holy Spirit.

to follow Christ, believers say they cannot, even with divine help, obey their Lord's teachings simply because those around them are too *wicked*, then what value do their religion, their profession of faith, and their supposed rebirth really have?

The objection we're examining contains such extreme contradictions that it barely holds up under scrutiny. Let's look at it more closely:

1. It assumes that Jesus gave his followers duties that applied to the entire period *before* the millennium—commands he supposedly knew they couldn't obey *until* the millennium—yet gave them no hint of this limitation.
2. It assumes that Jesus commanded specific actions that will have no possible relevance *in* the millennium, and therefore can never actually be obeyed.
3. It assumes that the moral principles, attitudes, and obligations of people *in* the millennium will be fundamentally different from what the New Testament asks of people *now*.<sup>3</sup>

Is there any doubt about these three claims? It's clear that Jesus presents his non-resistant teachings as *immediately* binding and practical—he gives no suggestion that they are *impractical* until some remote time in the future. Was this *intentional*, *accidental*, or a *mistake*! Any of these possibilities would diminish the honor of the Redeemer—and that is simply unacceptable.

It's also undeniably true, based on the objector's logic, that Christ gave commands that won't even be needed in the millennium. In that time, there will be no need to follow the instruction "resist not evil," because there will be no evildoers left to resist. No one will need to turn the other cheek when struck, hand over their cloak when sued for their coat, bless when reviled, forgive when wronged, or love their enemies—because in that day, there will be no violence, hatred, or injustice. There can be no non-resistance where there is no aggression. So, the objector essentially makes Jesus look absurd. According to this view, Jesus is saying: "You've heard it said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' but I say to you: resist not evil in the millennium, when no evil exists. And if someone strikes your right cheek in the millennium, when everyone is kind, turn the other also. And if anyone sues you for your coat in the millennium, when the law of love rules, give them your cloak too. Love your enemies in the millennium, when you'll have none. Bless those who curse you, when no one curses anymore. Do good to those who hate you, when all love you. Forgive seventy times seven, when there's nothing to forgive. Feed your enemies, when all are your friends. Overcome evil with good, when no evil remains!

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<sup>3</sup> "*now*" refers to the year 1846. Ballou uses "millennium" to mean an age of peace and righteousness on earth, immediately attainable whenever humanity truly lives by the unaltered gospel of Christ — especially the doctrine of non-resistance. As of 2025, the theological principle of non-resistance remains largely marginal in both public policy and mainstream religious practice, much as it was in the 19th century.

These are profound virtues—but according to this objection, they’re not for *now*, when they are most needed and could have the greatest impact in showing the contrast between Christ’s way and the world’s way. No, they’re reserved for the *millennium*—when they’ll be pointless because there will be *no way to practice them*. “Because in that day, all will know and serve the Lord, from the least to the greatest!” Is that really what the great Teacher meant? Who would dare to suggest such a thing?

The third assumption is also true: this objection presumes that the moral values, attitudes, and duties of people in the millennium will be fundamentally different from those that the New Testament calls for *now*. This is a deep and widespread error among Christians today, and it needs to be firmly rejected. Professor Upham addresses this misconception powerfully in his *Manual of Peace*, and I will now share an excellent excerpt from his work with my readers.

#### PRINCIPLES OF THE MILLENNIUM.

"Are we supposed to expect a new moral code, a new system of operations? Are we waiting for a new Savior, another crucifixion, or a revised and updated edition of the New Testament? Of course not. The teachings meant for the millennium are the same as those for today. The principles that will shape that future era are already binding on people now. The force that will end all conflict and unite all hearts will be nothing more or less than the gospel of Christ.

"The gospel is a book of principles—great, active, and unchanging principles. People reject it because they don’t truly understand it. Even Christians can be rightly accused of neglecting it, because in their worldliness they fail to grasp its depth and height. If heaven could be brought down to earth—if Europe, America, and the rest of the world were suddenly filled with angels and beings of a heavenly nature—the gospel, exactly as it is, would be enough to guide and govern them. The blessed souls of heaven, unlike humans, would never seek a better code. But can we imagine it being acceptable, under any circumstances, for an angel to retaliate against another angel, for a heavenly being to be hostile to another, or for one to claim the right to take the life of another? What kind of heaven would that be, where such behavior is permitted? And we must also ask: what kind of *millennium* would that be, if it operated by the same principle? When humans are fully restored to God’s favor—whether in heaven or on earth—should there be one set of moral principles for them, and another for angels and heavenly beings? Of course not. In all significant matters of right and wrong, the law that applies to angels applies to humans as well. If it seems completely inconsistent with the nature of heaven for angels to take life into their own hands, then it must be just as wrong for humans to do so in the millennium. And if it won’t be right for people in the millennium to take each other’s lives, then it isn’t right now either. We already have the same moral



code now that we will have then. We have the New Testament now, and we will still have it then—only we'll understand it better and love it more. Nothing will be added to it; nothing will be taken away. If it doesn't teach that human life is sacred and untouchable now, it never will. If it doesn't absolutely forbid war now, it never will. So if the right to take human life exists today under Christianity, it must also exist in the holy, peaceful, angelic age of the millennium—which is an idea both painful and horrifying. Therefore, if life will be sacred and untouchable in the millennium—if it will never be right for one person to kill another under any circumstance—then it isn't right now either. The same argument applies to other issues: If it won't be right to steal in the millennium, it isn't right to steal now. If it won't be right to be addicted or reckless, it isn't right now. If it won't be right to hold slaves then, it isn't right to hold them now. If it won't be right to kill or wage war in the millennium, it isn't right now either. The principles that will rule in the millennium are the very same ones that are meant to govern us now. We don't need new principles—just new behavior. If people started living according to the principles written by God in the New Testament, the millennium would begin tomorrow.

"We love to reflect on this topic. The word 'millennium' itself is deeply appealing. *'Scribenti manum injicit, et quamlibet festinantem in se morari cogit.'*<sup>1</sup> Even poetry struggles to do justice to such a great vision. Sometimes we see it as a desert transformed into a blossoming garden; sometimes as a city descending from heaven, dressed like a bride for her husband; sometimes as a vast temple rising from the earth, large enough to welcome every nation. This temple won't be made from perishable earthly materials—it will stand on unshakable foundations. Every great moral and religious principle is a pillar in this millennial temple. The principle of total abstinence from alcohol is one such pillar. It rose up suddenly, beautiful and bright, and already glows with rays of millennial light. The belief that slaveholding is a sin is another pillar—immense, unshakable, and awe-inspiring. The principle that human life is absolutely sacred is yet another. It is still being formed, but it will soon rise up, shining in its rightful place. And so, one principle after another will be established, one pillar after another will be raised, until the spiritual house of the Lord stands on the mountain heights—more beautiful to the eye than even the Parthenon. And what remains to be done? Only that the nations, as prophecy foretells, will flow into it. Only that the people will come to dwell in it and rejoice in it—and that is the glory of the millennium. But unless these principles are firm, unchanging, and eternal, the whole structure will collapse—just like the house built on sand: *'and the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it'.*"

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1 The millennium is such a powerful idea that "the writer cannot help but stop and dwell on it, even when he intends only to pass it by".

## OBJECTION II. EXTREMELY DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE.

"The practice of non-resistance, even if not impossible for most Christians, is certainly very difficult, even for the most spiritually mature. It feels like an excessive demand. It pushes people beyond what they believe they can handle, to the point that many may give up under the weight and abandon Christianity altogether, seeing it as entirely out of reach. It seems unwise to demand something that might discourage so many from even trying to be committed followers of Christ."

**ANSWER:** Who decides what's possible—God or humans? Who has the authority to determine what is required—Jesus Christ, or his followers? Should we reject a *duty* simply because it feels difficult? Should we doubt that *God's grace is enough* for even the weakest of his faithful children to help them do anything He commands? Should we adapt divine truth and obligation to make things easier for others, just to increase the number of shallow believers? Should we dilute and minimize the demands of our heavenly Father because we're afraid of scaring off half-hearted followers? Who would dare to whitewash the truth like that? Such a person must be dangerously permissive. Is this how Christ and his apostles built the Church in the face of contempt and persecution? And even if nine-tenths of today's worldly-minded Christians, after learning the truth of non-resistance, were to honestly admit, ► "*If this is Christianity, we can't truly claim to follow it, because its demands are more than we're willing to bear,*" would that really be a loss? Wouldn't the world actually be closer to being transformed at that point than it is now?

But really, why should we talk this way? God is in control—not man. He declares the law of perfect righteousness through His Son. That Son is the head of every person—the Lord and Master of all true followers. He has made the practice of non-resistance a clear and essential duty for his followers. He has promised to be with them and help them until the end of time. Given that, we need to decide: do we *believe* in Christ or not? Will we try to follow Him and obey His teachings, or not? Will we *try* to do our *duty*, trusting in the strength that Heaven offers, or not? If we're going to be Christians, then let's do our best to live as we're called to—and see just how much we truly fall short. If people honestly strive to live out Christian non-resistance with sincere commitment, even though they may suffer for it at times, they will soon find joy in a victory far greater. It's hard to do what's right in *this* area, just as it is in other aspects of life. But it's *no harder* than any other virtue. Every true virtue comes with painful and nearly overwhelming trials. If we were to abandon every obligation that involves the risk of death, we would have to throw out every commandment of God—because there isn't one that hasn't had its martyrs, as well as people who gave up under pressure. But for the faithful, even death is a blessing—if it's the cost of doing what's right. And for the obedient, those who willingly carry their cross, it remains true that Christ's "*yoke is easy and his burden is light.*" All we need is the determination to TRY. Once we decide that, we'll find that everything that's *right* is also *possible*.

So what is there that should discourage the sincere and honest soul? Didn't Jesus live and die as the perfect example of His own non-resistance teachings? Didn't His apostles? Didn't the early Christians for more than two hundred years? Haven't I already pointed to many examples showing that even in the worst situations, it was usually safer to practice non-resistance than to do otherwise? Look: robbers have been shamed and even converted; violent criminals made harmless; wild tribes inspired to lasting kindness; and every form of evil overcome with good! And yet after all this, am I still being asked, "What would you do if a robber attacked you? If someone tried to murder you? If a mob rioted against you? If a tribe of savages surrounded your home? If a foreign army invaded your land? If soldiers started killing and looting your neighborhood?" What would I do? If I did what was *right*—if I acted like a true Christian, with wisdom and courage—I would hold firmly to my non-resistance beliefs. And in all likelihood, I would witness a remarkable deliverance and win the greatest victory of all: overcoming both my own anger and that of my attackers.

#### HOLLOWNESS OF THE OBJECTION.

But the weakness of the objection we're facing becomes immediately clear when I reverse the argument and ask: does the practice of violent resistance protect anyone from severe trials, danger, hardship, and suffering? How is it that enough people have died in war to populate eighteen to forty planets <sup>4</sup> like ours? How is it that enough blood has been spilled in battle to fill a harbor large enough to hold the combined navies of the world at peaceful anchor? Do these overwhelming facts suggest that *resistance* is free from hardship, suffering, and deadly pain? Let us take a moment to imagine the scenes of just one battle.

#### PASSAGE OF THE TRAUN.

"In 1809, during the campaign of Aspern and Wagram, Massena <sup>5</sup> added to his previous fame and became one of the key pillars of Napoleon's empire on those fiercely contested battlefields. Before the battle of Aspern, after the battle of Eckmühl, while Bonaparte was marching toward Vienna, driving the Archduke

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<sup>4</sup> The total number of people killed in all wars throughout human history up to 1846 is estimated to be between 110 and 160 million. This represents roughly 9% to 13% of the global population at the time, which stood at approximately 1.2 billion. While this underscores the devastating impact of war, it falls far short of populating even *one* Earth, let alone eighteen to forty.

<sup>5</sup> André Masséna (1758-1817) was a prominent French military commander and one of Napoleon's most trusted Marshals.

before him, Massena commanded the advance guard. Pursuing the Archduke's retreating army—just as he had done earlier in Italy—he eventually reached the River Traun, at Ebersberg (or Ebersdorf), a small village on its banks just above where it flows into the Danube. Here, his victorious advance seemed to be halted. The stream, opposite Ebersberg, could only be crossed by a single long, narrow wooden bridge. From shore to shore, including sandbanks and islands, the total distance was nearly half a mile, and a single narrow causeway stretched the entire way to the bridge itself, which was about 330 yards long. Over this narrow half-mile path, the entire army would have to march, and the attacking columns would have to charge, since the swift river couldn't be forded. But a gate blocked the far end of the bridge, and the houses, packed with enemy soldiers, created a deadly crossfire over the whole opening, while artillery on the hills above controlled every inch of the narrow path. The high, rolling ground along the river was black with masses of infantry, supported by fierce batteries of cannon, all focused on that doomed bridge—enough firepower to tear it apart. To make matters worse, an old castle loomed over the stream, its crumbling walls equipped with cannons that also targeted the bridge. As if this wasn't enough to deter any attacker, another line of hills lay beyond the first, over which the road continued, covered in pine trees and providing a strong fallback position for the enemy. Thirty-five thousand men, supported by eighty cannons, waited behind these defenses to see if the French would attempt the crossing. Even Massena's legendary courage might have faltered at the sight. Advancing seemed like marching his army straight into the mouth of a volcano, into the devastating firepower that dominated the narrow bridge. It wasn't a quick dash over a short causeway—it was a slow march through a narrow passage under a storm of bullets. But this was the key to Vienna, and the Marshal decided to make the attempt—hoping that Lannes, who was to cross further upstream, would help by attacking the enemy's flank. The Austrians had foolishly left four battalions on the side from which the French approached. These were attacked first, and once driven from their positions, were forced back along the causeway at bayonet point and onto the bridge, pursued by the French. But the moment the French reached the bridge, the previously silent batteries opened a terrifying fire on the front of the column. The lead ranks crumbled like a sandbank collapsing under a flood. Advancing seemed hopeless. But the heroic Cohorn threw himself in front, rallied the troops, and led a renewed charge—forcing their way like a raging torrent across the bridge.

"Amid the chaos of the retreating Austrian battalions and their French pursuers, the Austrian troops on the far side saw the French flags flying. Fearing that the enemy would flood in along with their own fleeing comrades, they closed the gate and unleashed a storm of cannon fire on friend and foe alike. The slaughter became horrifying. Hit from the front by their own artillery and pressed from behind by French bayonets, the Austrian battalions either threw themselves into the river or were trampled underfoot by the relentless French advance. As ammunition wagons

exploded in the middle of the chaos, sending bodies flying, and enemy cannons rained destruction from above, the French smashed through the gate and barricades and stormed into the village. But here, facing fresh enemy battalions in front and caught in a deadly crossfire from the surrounding houses—and under a storm of bullets from the old castle—the brave French soldiers were forced to retreat, leaving two-thirds of their number dead on the streets. But Massena called up fresh battalions, which marched through the deadly fire sweeping the bridge and rejoined their comrades. Together, they retook the village and assaulted the castle itself. Along the narrow lanes leading to the castle, the dead lay in piles, and no sooner did the mangled front of the column reach the castle walls than it vanished under the ferocious fire from the battlements, as if swallowed by the earth. With yet another reinforcement, the fearless French returned to the assault, battered down the doors, and forced the garrison to surrender. The Austrian army, however, held its ground on the pine-covered ridge behind the village, resisting fiercely every step of the way. The French cavalry, now across the bridge, galloped through the village, trampling the dead and dying, and amid burning buildings and rolling smoke, pressed forward with triumphant shouts and clattering armor to charge again. Still, the Austrians held firm until, threatened with a flank attack, they were finally forced to retreat.

"There wasn't a more desperate crossing in the entire war than this one. Massena was forced to have his soldiers, whether dead or wounded, thrown into the river to clear the way for the columns. Whole companies fell at once, blocking the path and making it even harder to push forward. These had to be sacrificed, or the entire battered column fighting on the far side would be destroyed. It was a terrible sight: soldiers under deadly fire throwing their wounded comrades—begging to be spared—by the dozens and hundreds into the rushing river. Le Grand fought valiantly that day. In the choked defile and under relentless artillery fire, he advanced fearlessly. When advised by a superior officer, he replied only sternly, *'Make room for the head of my column—spare me your advice,'* and rushed to the very walls of the castle. The nature of the battle, fought on a narrow bridge and in cramped streets, gave the battlefield a nightmarish appearance. The dead lay in heaps and mounds, mangled and torn horribly by cavalry hooves and artillery wheels that had to roll over them. TWELVE THOUSAND men lay crushed, trampled, and stacked together, with burning beams and wreckage fallen across their bodies, drawing even more agonizing screams from the wounded below. Even Bonaparte, when he arrived, recoiled at the horrifying sight and turned away in disgust. The streets were a mass of mutilated, bleeding, crushed men, buried under the debris of burning buildings." – *American Review*.

Such was one of the world's ten thousand bloody conflicts. Now imagine all the courage and endurance shown in that horrific event redirected into service for peace and non-resistance! Would we still hear complaints about how difficult—even



impossible—it is to live by such a doctrine? Imagine those same soldiers as committed Christian non-resistants, spread throughout the world. Imagine them enduring every form of robbery, assault, abuse, injury, and insult that might come their way. Then let our critic tell us whether their service in the army of the Prince of Peace would really be harder than what they endured in the army of the Prince of murderers! The truth is, people can endure almost anything they *choose*. What they've suffered while serving evil proves what they are capable of enduring for the sake of righteousness. And service to righteousness doesn't demand even a thousandth part of the physical and mental suffering that sin does. How weak, then, is the objection we're addressing! Let no one who calls himself a Christian ever repeat it. A sincere heart, a sound moral principle, and a conscientious will can never find Christian non-resistance to be an impossible or unbearable virtue.

### **OBJECTION III. - MORE DIFFICULT IN SMALL THAN LARGE MATTERS.**

"The practice of non-resistance is more difficult in small, everyday matters than in large ones. It's not in refraining from war and battle, or in bearing major and widely known injuries with patience, that non-resistance demands the greatest sacrifice. In such cases, people draw strength from public admiration and sympathy — and even from the scale of the struggle and the potential glory of victory. Extraordinary circumstances and events tend to inspire extraordinary passion, strength, and determination. But in ordinary life, where people face countless small trials that slowly drain their energy and spirit — unnoticed, without sympathy or compassion, and often entirely ignored — it is far more difficult to endure the petty, annoying acts of aggression, the minor injustices, and the insults inflicted by mean-spirited individuals. Yet your doctrine demands that even the abused wife of a violent husband, and the person struck or insulted by some arrogant brute, refrain from responding with violence — and even avoid taking legal action, at least under the current form of human government. It seems you would not even approve of using military force to stop a mob, or of calling on the government to protect someone's property, family, or life. It is this extreme and, frankly, intolerably strict aspect of your doctrine that I object to, as much as to anything else about it."

### **ANSWER.**

There's truth in the claim that practicing non-resistance in the small matters of daily life is harder than in major events during extraordinary times. But isn't that true of all the great virtues taught by the Law or the Gospel? It might be easier to avoid idolatry, adultery, fornication, murder, robbery, theft, lying, or coveting when you're under the watchful eye of public scrutiny—even in the face of great temptation—than it is in private, unobserved moments. It might be easier to die a martyr in front of a shocked or even *admiring* crowd than to endure the petty martyrdom of a taunt, a slap, a punch, or a twisted nose — things that no one sees



and few would care about. So be it. But does that change the principle, or cancel the obligation? The real question is: What is right? What *should* we do—in *small* as well as *large* matters? That's what we must determine—not what is most convenient, easy, comfortable, or self-serving when temptations arise. We've already agreed that we should *never respond to injury with injury*. So are we now asking for permission to break this rule in small ways, or just occasionally? Should we go ask for permission to break the Ten Commandments in small ways? Try arguing that it's hard, in *daily life*, not to lie just a *little*, *deceive* just a *little*, *cheat* a *little*, *extort* a *little*, *hate* a *little*, *steal* a *little*, *kill* a *little*, be *idolatrous* a *little*, or *lust* just a *little*. If you can get Heaven to excuse all that, then maybe you'll be granted permission to retaliate a *little* or return evil for evil just a *little*—in everyday situations. But until that happens, the moral *law* and *standard* of righteousness can't be relaxed just to make life easier. *Duty* must be upheld without compromise, and those who show weakness, imperfection, or sin must bear the shame and responsibility.

It's in the so-called *small matters* that virtue is most often betrayed. A constant dripping will wear through the hardest stone. Constant carelessness in small things erodes all moral character. The ocean is made up of tiny drops. Righteousness is the sum of the *little* choices we make each day. A person who's habitually untrustworthy in small things cannot be trusted in big ones. They might do what's right—or they might not. One big reason why our public institutions, laws, and policies are so unjust and inhumane is because individual consciences are routinely compromised in the small, ordinary matters of life. So if non-resistance is a duty, then it must be practiced in small things just as much as in large ones.

And despite all the talk about how difficult it is to live this way, we know it has been done—and *can* be done. The only thing lacking is the *will* to *try*. To add to the many examples already given, I'll now offer a few more—mostly focused on personal situations and those so-called *small matters* of everyday life.

#### THE PROFANE SWEARER REPROVED AND SUBDUED.

Mr. Deering, a Puritan minister, was once at a public dinner when a stylish young man sat across from him at the table. In addition to other foolish talk, the young man began swearing profanely, which prompted Mr. Deering to seriously and sternly correct him. The young man, offended by the rebuke, immediately threw a glass of beer in Mr. Deering's face. Mr. Deering didn't react to the insult; he simply wiped his face and continued eating as if nothing had happened. Soon after, the young man resumed his profane talk, and once again, Mr. Deering reproved him. This time, the young man, even more enraged and aggressive, threw another glass of beer in Mr. Deering's face. Yet Mr. Deering remained calm and undisturbed, continuing to show his devotion to God by enduring the insult with Christian humility and quiet self-control. This deeply shocked the young man. He got up from the table, knelt

down, asked Mr. Deering for forgiveness, and declared that if anyone else in the room insulted the minister like that, he would stab them with his sword. This was a real-life demonstration of the New Testament principle: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21)—*Anonymous*.

### THE CHRISTIAN SLAVE AND HIS ENEMY.

The following account was first published in the London Christian Observer:-

A slave in the West Indies, originally from Africa, had come under the influence of Christian teaching and became especially valuable to his owner because of his honesty and overall good behavior. After some time, his master promoted him to a position of some importance in managing the estate. On one occasion, when the master wanted to buy twenty additional slaves, he sent this man to make the selections, instructing him to choose those who were strong and likely to be good workers. The man went to the slave market and began examining the people for sale. He had not looked around for long before he fixed his attention on an old, weak, and disabled slave, and told his master that this man must be included. The old man pleaded to be allowed to come along, and the slave dealer remarked that if they were buying twenty, he would throw this man in as a bonus. The purchase was made, and the newly bought slaves were brought back to the master's plantation. But the manager showed more care and attention to the old, decrepit African than to any of the others. He took the man into his own home and laid him on his own bed. He fed him from his own table and gave him water from his own cup. When the man was cold, he carried him into the sunlight; when he was too hot, he moved him into the shade of a coconut tree. His master, amazed at the care his trusted slave was giving to another, questioned him about it. He said, "You couldn't possibly care this much for the old man unless there was some special reason. Is he a relative of yours—perhaps your father?" "No, *massa*," the man replied. "He not my father." "Then he must be your older brother?" "No, *massa*, he not my brother." "Maybe he's an uncle or some other relation?" "No, *massa*, he not any kin to me—not even a friend!" "Then why do you care for him so much?" the master asked. "He my enemy, *massa*," the slave answered. "He sold me to the slave trader. But my Bible tells me that when my enemy is hungry, feed him, and when he is thirsty, give him something to drink."

### HOW TO OVERCOME EVIL.

"I once had a neighbor who, although a clever man, came to me one day during haying season and said, 'Mr. White, I want you to come and get your geese.'

'Why?' I asked. 'What are my geese doing?'

'They're pecking at my pigs' ears while they're eating and chasing them away—and I won't allow it.'

'What can I do?' I replied.

'You need to yoke them.'

'I don't have time to do that right now,' I said. 'I guess they'll just have to run free.'

'If you don't take care of them, I will,' said the clever shoemaker, now angry. 'What do you say, Mr. White?'

'I can't deal with them at the moment,' I answered, 'but I'll pay you for any damage they cause.'

'Well,' he said, 'you'll find that's not so easy, I guess.'

He left, and soon after I heard a terrible squawking among the geese. The next thing we knew, three of them were missing. My children found them—badly injured, dead, and thrown into the bushes.

'Now,' I said, 'everyone stay calm and let me take care of this.'

A few days later, the shoemaker's hogs broke into my cornfield. I saw them but let them stay there for quite a while. Eventually, I chased them out, picked up the corn they had knocked down, and fed it to them along the roadside. By this time, the shoemaker arrived in a rush, looking for his pigs.

'Have you seen my hogs?' he asked.

'Yes, sir,' I said. 'You'll find them over there, eating some corn they knocked down in my field.'

'In your field?'

'Yes, sir,' I said. 'Hogs love corn—you know they're made for eating it.'

'How much damage did they do?'

'Oh, not too much,' I replied.

He went off to check and estimated the damage was about a bushel and a half of corn.

'Oh no,' I said, 'it couldn't be that much.'

'Yes,' he insisted, 'and I'll pay you every cent.'

'No,' I said, 'you don't owe me anything. My geese caused you a lot of trouble.'

The shoemaker blushed and went home. That winter, when we came to settle accounts, the shoemaker was determined to pay me for the corn.

'No,' I told him, 'I won't take anything.'

After some discussion, we parted. But a few days later, I ran into him on the road and we started talking in a friendly way. As I went to leave, he hesitated. I paused too, and for a moment neither of us said anything. Finally, he said, 'There's something weighing on me.'

'Well, what is it?' I asked.

'Those geese,' he said. 'I killed three of your geese, and I won't feel at peace until I tell you how sorry I am.' Tears welled up in his eyes.

'Oh, don't worry about it,' I said. 'I suppose my geese were annoying.'

I never took anything from him for the loss. But from then on, whenever my animals got into his field, he seemed glad—because it gave him a chance to show how patient he could be.

'Now,' said the narrator, 'conquer yourself, and you'll find that kindness can conquer where nothing else can.' " — *Anonymous*.

## HENRY C. WRIGHT AND HIS ASSAILANT.

The following incident from the life of Henry C. Wright shows his admirable consistency and the powerful effect that non-resistance can have on someone who does wrong. He was staying at a hotel in Philadelphia and became involved in a conversation about non-resistance. During the discussion, an officer who was present became angry and hit him. Mr. Wright ignored the attack and continued speaking. A few moments later, the officer hit him again. Still calm, Mr. Wright kept the conversation going. The man struck him a third time, almost knocking him down. Though badly hurt by the blows, Mr. Wright steadied himself, took the man's hand, and said, "I feel no anger toward you and I hope to see you at my home soon." He then left the group and went back to his house. Mr. Wright saw the man much sooner than expected. At dawn the next morning, the same man knocked at his door. As soon as he entered, he said, "*Can you forgive me? I've been in torment all night. I only hit you because I thought you would hit me back.*" "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he who controls his spirit is greater than one who captures a city." – *Rev. George Wilson McCree*.

"He that, unshrinking and without a Groan,  
Bears the first Wound, may finish all the War  
With mere courageous Silence, and come off Conqueror:" – *Isaac Watts*.

## THE VICTORIOUS LITTLE BOY.

I heard the following story from a trustworthy gentleman. A young boy in Connecticut, known for his serious nature and thoughtful habits, usually worked around a mechanic's shop where nearly all the workers regularly drank alcohol. The boy had adopted temperance principles, and though he was often invited, he never gave in to joining the others in drinking. At one point, his Sunday school teacher had a conversation with him about certain Bible verses related to non-resistance. This deeply affected the boy, and he sincerely declared that he would try to live according to this important Christian principle. Three or four of the heavier drinkers in the shop, annoyed by what they saw as the boy's overly pious attitude and sensitive conscience, decided to put him in his place—or at least to test his convictions. They planned to force a drink of rum down his throat. They waited until the boy was alone in the shop with them and then offered him a drink. He refused. They told him they would make him drink it. He stayed calm and composed. They threatened him with violence, but he neither showed anger nor tried to run away, nor did he seem willing to give in. He simply said that drinking was wrong and he could not do it. They grabbed him—one man on each arm—while a third stood ready with a bottle, prepared to pour the liquor into his mouth. Still, the boy stayed peaceful and firm, saying that he had never harmed them and never would, and that God would be his friend and protector no matter how they treated

him. The man holding the bottle, who until then had been determined to carry out the plan, was so moved by the boy's calm innocence and non-resisting spirit that, as he later admitted with something close to tears, he found himself physically unable to lift his hand. Twice he tried to raise the bottle as he placed it to the boy's mouth, but his arm wouldn't cooperate. In that moment, the boy offered no resistance other than a gentle, pleading look—but it was enough. The ringleader was overcome with emotion and called off the plan, saying he could not and would not harm such an innocent, sincere, and kind-hearted child. That is the power of moral strength. That is how, at least sometimes, evil can be overcome by good.

#### COLONY OF PRACTICAL CHRISTIANS.

The following is another excerpt from the writings of Lydia M. Child. It needs no praise—it speaks directly to the better part of the soul and leaves its sweet fragrance there.

"The most profound gifts my soul has received during my journey through life have often come from people who were poor—not just in wealth, but in education. One in particular stands out: a hardworking, uneducated mechanic from either Indiana or Illinois. He told me that he was one of thirty or forty New Englanders who had moved west about twelve years earlier to settle in the wilderness. Most of them had been neighbors, drawn together by shared beliefs on many subjects. For several years before their move, they had regularly gathered in each other's homes to talk sincerely and simply about their duties to God and to others. Their only book was the Bible; their only clergy was the light within their hearts. At that time, there were no anti-slavery societies—but guided by the Gospel and a humble willingness to learn, they didn't need outside help to recognize their responsibilities to the enslaved. The messages of peace societies had reached them only faintly, and non-resistance societies didn't yet exist. But with the teachings of the Prince of Peace and hearts open to his message, what need had they for preambles or resolutions?

" Spiritually rich, this small group set out for the Far West. Their inner lives were flourishing gardens; outwardly, they built homes in the wilderness. They were hardworking and frugal, and everything they touched prospered. But soon, trouble came in the form of reckless, unscrupulous newcomers—people who believed in power and deceit and lived by those beliefs. The Christian settlers responded to these wrongs with gentle words and unwavering kindness. They went even further—they publicly declared, 'Do whatever harm you wish to us; we will repay you only with good.' Lawyers moved into the area, offering their services to handle disputes. The settlers responded, 'We don't need you. As neighbors, we welcome you warmly, but in our community, your profession has no role.' 'What will you do if someone burns your barns or steals your crops?' the lawyers asked. 'We will return good for evil,' they replied. 'We believe this is the highest truth and therefore the wisest course.'



"When the troublemakers heard this, they thought it was a hilarious joke and went out of their way to provoke them. They would let cows loose at night so they'd trample cornfields. The Christians would repair the damage as best they could, put the cows in their barns, and at dusk lead them gently home. 'Neighbor,' they would say, 'your cows were in my field today. I made sure they were well fed, but I didn't keep them overnight so your children wouldn't go without milk.'

"If this was meant as a joke, those who played it found they couldn't laugh. Gradually, the attitude of these unruly neighbors began to change. They stopped cutting horses' tails and breaking the legs of chickens. Rough boys would say to their younger brothers, 'Don't throw that stone, Bill! Remember when I killed that chicken last week? They gave it to Mom because they thought chicken broth would help poor Mary feel better. You should be ashamed to throw stones at their chickens.' In this way, good overcame evil—until eventually, no one in the area would willingly harm them.

"Years passed, and the settlers prospered materially more than their neighbors, while earning universal love and respect. No lawyer or constable earned fees from them. When the sheriff came to collect war taxes and seize their goods, he stammered and apologized. They gently responded, 'It's a bad business, friend. Examine your conscience and see if that's not true.' Though they refused to pay taxes that supported war, they were famously generous when it came to any useful or charitable cause.

"After ten years, the government put their land up for public auction. By custom, settlers who had worked the land were allowed to buy it at the official price, which at the time was \$1.25 per acre. But land speculation was running wild. Swarms of speculators came from across the country, and wealthy investors from cities like Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston sent agents to buy up Western land. No one expected fairness or tradition to be respected. On the first day of the sale, prices soared—\$17, \$25, even \$40 per acre. The Christian colony had little hope of keeping their farms. As the first settlers, they had chosen the best land and made it highly productive. Its market value was even higher than what others were paying for less desirable plots. The settlers prepared themselves mentally to move again—perhaps deeper into the wilderness—only to face the same hardship once more. But on the morning their land was to be auctioned, they noticed something incredible. Their neighbors were moving through the crowd, pleading with the speculators: 'Don't bid on this land! These people have worked it for ten years. They've never harmed anyone—man or animal. They repay evil with kindness. They're a blessing to this community. It would be wrong and shameful to take their land. Let them have it for the government price.'



"The sale began. The settlers bid \$1.25 per acre, prepared to go higher if needed. But *not a single person* in that massive crowd of greedy speculators made another bid. Without any opposition, the land was returned to them. I don't know of a more powerful example of evil being overcome by good. The wisest form of political economy is already contained in the teachings of Christ."

### THE AVENGER SLAYED.

I'll add one more powerful story and then close. I'm quoting from the Advocate of Peace, April 1845, which itself cites The History of Danish Missions:

"The history of the Danish missions in Greenland is well known. Hans Egede, a man of deep compassion and apostolic zeal, was the pioneer in efforts to bring Christianity to the wild and nomadic people of the frozen north. Among his successors was his grandson, Hans Egede Saabye, whose fascinating diary includes the following story of a man set on revenge—but changed by the power of the gospel into a man of love.

"In Greenland, the custom requires that every murder, especially the murder of a father, must be avenged by the closest male relative. About twenty years before Saabye's arrival, a man was brutally murdered in front of his own son. The boy, only thirteen at the time, was too young to defend his father—but he never forgot his duty to avenge him. For his own safety, he fled to a remote part of the country, where he secretly kept the fire of revenge alive in his heart for twenty-five years. He waited patiently for the right moment to unleash his fury. The murderer was powerful and well-protected, so the son didn't dare approach him alone. But eventually, he gathered a group of his relatives and set out to find the killer, arriving near the residence of Saabye with vengeance on his mind. In Greenland, homes are considered community property. People leave them in the short summer, and when they return in winter, they occupy whatever house is available. Winter had just begun, but the avenger and his group found no empty shelter—except one house, which belonged to the preacher of peace and forgiveness. Even though Saabye knew their purpose, he allowed them to stay in his home and treated them with his usual kindness and respect. These gestures softened the avenger's heart. He came to thank Saabye—and kept returning so often that he eventually apologized, saying, 'You're so kind that I can't stay away from you.' A few weeks later, he said, 'I want to know more about that great Lord of Heaven you talk about so much. Some of my relatives are interested too.' Saabye welcomed the opportunity and found that ten or twelve in the group were eager to learn. He sent a catechist to live with them, and was especially pleased by the progress of the avenger, who often left his fishing to listen and learn. Eventually, the man decided to ask for baptism.

In May, a man named Kunnuk came to Saabye and said, 'Teacher, will you baptize me? You know I'm obedient. I know God, and my wife wants to believe too.'

Saabye replied, 'Yes, you do know something of God. You know He is good. You see how He loves you and wants to make you happy. But He also wants you to obey Him.'

'I *do* love Him,' Kunnuk said earnestly. 'I *will* obey Him.'

'Then,' Saabye continued, 'you must not kill anyone. You've often heard His commandment: "*You shall not kill.*"'

Kunnuk shook his head, deeply troubled, and said to himself, 'That's a hard teaching... a hard teaching.'

'Listen to me, good Kunnuk,' said Saabye. 'I know you've come here to avenge your father's murder. But if you want to follow Christ, you can't do that.'

'But he killed my father—my own father!' Kunnuk burst out. 'I saw it, and I couldn't help him. Now I have to punish the murderer.'

'That saddens me,' said Saabye.

'Why?' asked Kunnuk.

'Because it means you still intend to kill.'

'Only the one who deserves to die,' replied Kunnuk.

'But God's commandment says *you must not kill*'

'I *will* not—only *him*.'

'But you must not kill even him. Don't you remember what we've read all winter? "*Do not take revenge, but leave room for God's wrath. Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord.*"'

'So the wicked should just get away with murder?' asked Kunnuk.

'No,' Saabye replied, 'God will punish him. Maybe in this life, definitely on the Day of Judgment. He will repay everyone according to their deeds.'

'But that's too far away,' said Kunnuk. 'My relatives will shame me if I don't avenge my father now.'

'If you didn't know God's will, I wouldn't say anything. But now you do, and I can't stay silent.'

'It's so hard!' Kunnuk exclaimed. 'What should I do?'

'Don't kill him. Forgive him,' said Saabye.

'Forgive him?!' Kunnuk shouted. 'That's strange and difficult teaching.'

'It's not mine,' replied Saabye. 'It's Christ's.'

"Kunnuk sighed deeply and said nothing.

Saabye continued, 'Maybe your father wasn't innocent. Maybe he had killed someone too.'

'I don't know about that,' said Kunnuk. 'I just know this man deserves to die.'

'Then I've said all I can,' said Saabye. 'Kill him if you must—but you won't be a believer. And know this: his children may one day come to kill you.'

'You're not kind anymore,' Kunnuk snapped. 'Now you speak harshly.'

'No, Kunnuk,' Saabye said gently. 'I still love you. That's why I don't want you to sin against God, who will judge both you and your enemy.'

As Saabye turned to go, Kunnuk called out, 'Wait, teacher—I need to speak with my relatives.'

Kunnuk's family pressured him every day to seek revenge. They threatened him with shame and curses if he backed down. Inside, he was torn. Saabye noticed the inner battle during his visits. Without directly mentioning the issue, he read Bible passages and hymns that encouraged peace and forgiveness. A few days later, Kunnuk returned, looking deeply troubled. 'I *want* to,' he said, 'but I *don't* want to. I *hear*, and I *don't* hear. I've never felt like this before.'

'What do you want to do—and *not* do?' Saabye asked.

'I want to *forgive* him... and I *don't* want to. I have no ears—and yet I have ears.'

'When you *don't* want to forgive,' Saabye explained, 'that's your old self resisting. When you *do* want to forgive, that's your new self speaking. Which voice will you follow?'

'Yesterday, when you spoke, my heart wanted to obey,' said Kunnuk.

'Then listen to that voice,' Saabye encouraged him. 'It's the voice of your Heavenly Father. He calls you to be like Him. He gives sunshine and rain to both friends and enemies. And think of Jesus—did He ever hate His enemies? When people cursed Him, did He curse back? When they beat and crucified Him, did He fight back? No—He prayed for them: "*Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing.*"'

That touched Kunnuk. A tear formed in his eye. 'Yes... that was admirable,' he said. 'But He was better than us.'

'Yes, far better,' Saabye agreed. 'But if we truly want to, God will help us. Listen to how someone like us prayed for his killers.' Then Saabye read the story of Stephen's martyrdom.

Wiping his eyes, Kunnuk said, 'That wicked man! But he's with God now, I'm sure. My heart is so moved. Give me a little more time. When I've silenced my other heart, I'll return.'

Soon Kunnuk came back with a changed face—filled with peace and joy. 'Now I'm happy,' he said. 'I don't hate anymore. I've forgiven him. My evil heart is quiet now. When you read about Jesus praying on the cross, I made a vow in my heart: I *will* forgive. And I *have* forgiven. Now I hope my wife and I can be baptized.'

His request was granted. On the day of the ceremony, he gave a simple and moving testimony. Tears ran down his cheeks as he knelt to be baptized. Afterward, he said, 'Accept me now as a believer. I will hate no more. Let us love each other and all people.' He soon sent a message to the man who had murdered his father: 'I'm now a believer. You have nothing to fear.' He even invited the man to his home and welcomed him warmly. When the murderer later invited Kunnuk to visit in return, he went alone. On the way back, Kunnuk discovered a hole had been cut in his kayak—an attempt to drown him. But he calmly bailed out the water and said with a smile, 'Ah! he's still afraid. But I'll never harm him. Vengeance isn't mine anymore. I leave him to God, and pray he sees his sins, just as I have seen mine.' "

## CONCLUSION.

Who can look at such powerful real-life examples of Christian non-resistance and not be deeply moved by the beauty and power of this noble teaching? Can we then turn and look at the battlefield, the hospital full of broken and dying bodies, the flashy military parade, the pride of blood-stained war heroes—or even the more everyday scenes of conflict, like fights, acts of revenge, duels, lawsuits, and the endless arguments of a world obsessed with *fighting back*—and not feel sick and disgusted? How base, how pitiful, how repulsive all of these are when compared to the spiritual courage, the moral strength, the beautiful self-sacrifice, the life-saving, heart-changing, soul-redeeming actions of true Christianity! “Oh, my soul, don’t join their schemes; may my honor never be linked with their gatherings.”

And should those who are meant to be “the light of the world” and “the salt of the earth” dishonor their sacred calling and stain their robes by getting involved in the struggles driven by human ambition, violence, and revenge? Should they crave the brutal pleasures of human savagery, admire the false glory of military worship, and delight in acts of human cruelty? If they are risen with Christ, shouldn’t they be seeking the things that belong to Christ, breathing in the spirit of his love, walking in his footsteps, and finding their greatest joy in doing the will of the Father? Should they run from the dangers of Gethsemane, look hopelessly from afar at the cross of non-resistance, and choose instead to join a world caught up in mutual hatred and destruction? Will they shrink back in fear because they see threats in the path? Will they, like a lazy person, stand shivering and refuse to sow because it’s cold? Should they complain that the duties of love are too hard—that non-resistance is unworkable, impossible, or just too difficult—when its principles are so godlike, its spirit so heavenly, its examples so beautiful, its results so refreshing, and its victories so magnificent? Even if it demands strict discipline—even if it calls for difficult effort, painful endurance, or even heroic acts of moral courage—does that make it any less attractive to noble hearts? On the contrary, let it seem even more deserving of passionate commitment. Let its call for brave volunteers stir a deeper, holier ambition—an ambition to be and to do something truly worthy of our divine origin, worthy of the love that bought our redemption with the tears, the groans, and the blood of the cross—worthy of eternal life, worthy of living and dying for. To save even one life, to bring back one lost brother, to make even one heart pure and joyful—or even just to prepare ourselves through self-denial to be a home for the Spirit of God—is worth far more than all the riches, power, and glory ever won by the world’s favorite warriors through violence. “God forbid that we should take pride in anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“How hardly man this lesson learns,  
To smile and bless the hand that spurns;  
To see the blow – to feel the pain,  
But render only love again.  
This spirit not to earth is given;  
One had it – he came from heaven.  
Reviled, rejected and betrayed,  
No curse he breathed, no plaint he made,  
But when in death’s deep pang he sighed,  
Prayed for his murderers and died.” – *Edmiston*.

## CHAPTER VII.

### NON-RESISTANCE IN RELATION TO GOVERNMENT.

Is Non-Resistance for or against human government? – Human government *de facto* – - Objection - answer - Constitutions of Massachusetts and the United States – Why not participate to reform? – Cannot *lie* and commit *perjury* – Delegated power to declare war – Letters of marque and reprisal, piracy – Legal and political action – How to reform government – Injurious force not essential to government – Under what circumstances this country might have a non-resistant government – View of the present order of things, and remedy – Extract from M. Guizot’s Lectures – Conclusion.

#### IS NON-RESISTANCE FOR OR AGAINST HUMAN GOVERNMENT?

In this chapter, I want to explore how non-resistance relates to human government. Is non-resistance, as described in this work, basically *supportive of* or *opposed to* human government? The answer depends in what sense the adjective *human* is combined with the noun *government*. If we define *human* government as meaning that people naturally have the *absolute* power to make laws and exercise control *over* other humans in whatever way they choose, then non-resistance is clearly *opposed* to it. Non-resistance rejects the idea that *humans* possess this kind of original, *absolute* power. It argues that *absolute* power belongs to God alone. In this view, all legitimate government comes from God, and people are always subjects, not rulers. So, whenever someone demands something that goes against God’s law, they are not only rebelling against God but also trying to wrongfully dominate their fellow human, who is their equal. Humans don’t have the right to create laws or govern in a way that is independent of God. They can only do so with God’s guidance and approval. If anyone questions this position, advocates of non-resistance are ready to defend it—even against the entire world. Only those who deny God altogether—atheists or those who *wish to replace God*—would be bold or reckless enough to argue otherwise.

On the other hand, if we define *human* government as simply a way for *divine authority* to be carried out through *human institutions*—with some human imperfections—then non-resistance fully supports it. There’s no fundamental conflict. Non-resistance sees that humans are social beings by nature. It acknowledges the importance of human relationships—between spouses, parents and children, friends and neighbors, and communities both small and large. It supports any kind of social organization rooted in love for God and for one another. A government like this would be structured to follow the highest moral principles known to humanity—those coming from God. It would reject any authority used to enforce laws or customs that violate the natural equality and brotherhood of all people. Its guiding principles would be: ► *never repay injury with injury; never*



*return evil for evil. Evil can only be overcome through good!* Such a government would devote all of its resources—spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical, industrial, and financial—to promoting education, moral living, basic well-being, and the common good for all. Its officials would be seen as public servants, not privileged elites. They would receive only a fair and equal share of the nation’s wealth, just like ordinary workers. There would be no corruption or exploitation by those in power. This kind of government wouldn’t claim authority just for the sake of control. Its laws, court decisions, and executive actions would all be based on what is genuinely right and what benefits the community. It would reject pomp, showmanship, and empty symbols. Instead, it would be a simple, functional organization that meets practical needs—nothing more. It wouldn’t waste money on appearances or prestige. No leader would try to act superior or godlike to others. Even the highest-ranking public official would live in a home no better than that of an average citizen, eat the same kind of food, drink the same kind of drinks, wear the same kind of clothes, and travel in the same kind of vehicle. They would be ashamed to ask for anything better. “*Whoever wants to be a leader must be a servant.*” That’s the model for leadership in a truly Christian republic. A government like this would fulfill the prophecy: “*Your leaders will be peaceful, your tax collectors just. Violence and destruction will no longer be heard in your land.*” One day, this kind of government will exist all over the world. It may still be far off, but it is on its way. Christian non-resistance is preparing the way and will celebrate its arrival with joy, along with an awakened and enlightened world. At that point, people will look back at today’s half-civilized governments the way scholars now look at old paintings of tribal chiefs covered in war paint and feathers, leaning on their weapons. When *human* government is understood to mean *only* divine authority *expressed* through human form, structure, and practice, then non-resistance wholeheartedly *supports* it.

#### HUMAN GOVERNMENT DE FACTO.

But what about *supporting* human government as it *actually exists today*? That’s the real, practical question now. The answer is “No”. Why not? Because non-resistance cannot be both *for* and *against* itself. *Non-resistance* cannot support *war*, *capital punishment*, *slavery*, or any kind of *punitive injury*. And it cannot support any government that fundamentally *upholds* these things. These practices directly contradict the principles of non-resistance. Therefore, its followers cannot voluntarily participate in governments that are built on such foundations. This isn’t because they oppose government as a *concept*, but because they firmly reject these deeply rooted *evils*—evils that are woven into the very fabric of today’s political systems, even alongside the good. Non-resistants believe these anti-Christian elements must be removed from both national and state constitutions before they can, in good conscience, participate in the political process. Are they justified in taking this stance?

## OBJECTION.

"No," says the critic, "you're not clearly justified in claiming that our national and state constitutions are necessarily committed to *war, the death penalty, slavery, and punitive harm*. But even if you're right about *that*, you're *definitely wrong* to refuse to participate in government until those things are removed. If you won't hold office, vote, or take legal action within the system, how do you expect any of these problems to be fixed? You should take part in government, if for no other reason than to help change these parts of the constitution. Who else will remove these evils if *you*, who clearly see and oppose them, won't do anything to stop them? Stay involved and reform the system from within. By refusing to participate, you're actually undermining your own goals."

## ANSWER.

War, capital punishment, slavery, and many forms of punitive injustice have existed and still exist in the United States. Are these things in conflict with the basic laws of the land? Or do they actually thrive under their protection? The answer is plain to anyone who looks. There's no need to engage in complex legal arguments trying to prove that the federal Constitution is against slavery, or to defend the idea that it's aligned with Christianity when it comes to the death penalty. Instead, let's just consider a few excerpts—one from the Constitution of Massachusetts (a state seen as progressive), and two or three from the U.S. Constitution. These examples will show whether non-resistants can in good faith support even republican constitutions—let alone the constitutions, both written and unwritten, of older world powers.

### EXTRACT FROM THE CONSTITUTION OF MASSACHUSETTS.

"The governor of this commonwealth for the time being, shall be the commander in chief of the army and navy, and of all the military forces of the state, by sea and land, and shall have full power by himself, or by any commander, or other officer or officers, from time to time, to *train, instruct, exercise and govern* the militia and navy; and, for the special defence and safety of the commonwealth, *to assemble in martial array, and put in warlike posture*, the inhabitants thereof, and to lead and conduct them, and with them to encounter, repel, resist, expel and pursue, *by force of arms*, as well by sea as by land, within or without the limits of this commonwealth, and also to **KILL, SLAY and DESTROY**, if necessary, and conquer, by all fitting ways, enterprises, and means *whatsoever*, all and every such person and persons as shall, at any time hereafter, in a hostile manner, attempt or enterprise the destruction, invasion, detriment, or annoyance of this commonwealth; and to use and exercise, over the army and navy, and over the militia in actual service, the law martial, in time of war or invasion, and also in time of rebellion, declared by the legislature to exist, as occasion shall necessarily require; and to take and surprise by all ways and means whatsoever, all and every such person or persons, with their ships, arms, ammunition and other goods, as shall, in a hostile manner, invade, or attempt the invading, conquering, or annoying this commonwealth; and that the governor be intrusted with all these and other powers, incident to the offices of captain-general and commander in chief, and admiral, to be exercised agreeably to the rules and regulations of the constitution, and the laws of the land, and not otherwise."

## EXTRACTS FROM THE U. S. CONSTITUTION.

"The Congress shall have Power ... To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the Laws of Nations;

To declare War; grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal: and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;

To raise and support Armies ...;

To provide and maintain a Navy;

To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress insurrections and Invasions;

To provide for organizing, arming and disciplining the Militia," etc.

"The President shall be Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into actual Service *of the United States*;" etc.

Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation:—"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

"This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the **SUPREME LAW** of the Land."

These excerpts should make it obvious to anyone that our state and national constitutions clearly authorize, support, and legitimize war, preparations for war, and all the horrors that come with or result from the violent military system. The critic has no valid argument to stand on in this matter.

## WHY NOT PARTICIPATE IN ORDER TO REFORM?

Now, let's address the second part of the objection. Even if non-resistants are right in saying that the government is fundamentally based on *military force* and *punitive power*, the critic still argues that they are *wrong* to refuse participation until these features are removed. He wants to know how—or by whom—these evils will be eliminated if we refuse to hold public office, vote, or take legal action. He urges us to stay involved in the government to reform it, and claims that by refusing to participate, we actually undermine our own goals.

To most people, this probably sounds like good common sense. But I will show that it is more convincing in appearance than in truth. If our concerns were only about minor issues or incidental flaws in current governments, then the critic's argument would hold. We're not demanding perfect governments, either in theory or practice, as a condition for our participation. We can imagine a government that is deeply rooted in Christian principles but still has some smaller errors or occasional administrative abuses due to human imperfection. In such governments, we could in good conscience take part—and we would even feel morally obligated to do so in order to help correct and improve them.

But the governments we're talking about now are not just flawed in small ways—they are *fundamentally* and deeply **ANTI-CHRISTIAN**. As the saying goes, "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint." The use of military force and harmful punishment is at the core of their existence. These elements are as

incompatible with non-resistance as pride is with humility, anger with gentleness, revenge with forgiveness, death with life, and destruction with salvation.

These Constitutions are not just dry documents—they serve both as *declarations* of belief and as *binding agreements*. They state what is to be accepted as truth and duty, and they represent a solemn agreement among the people about what *should* or *must* be done in their name. They are written with clarity and precision so that there is no misunderstanding. When someone agrees to these constitutions, swears to uphold them, or accepts being a part of the system they create, they are, in effect, *declaring* that they believe what the constitution says is true and right. They are also pledging to help put it into action. If the constitution doesn't reflect their beliefs, but they still endorse or accept it, they are *lying*. And if they pledge to support it without genuinely intending to follow through, they are committing *perjury* by breaking a solemn promise.

#### CANNOT LIE AND COMMIT PERJURY.

Am I really being advised to *lie* and commit *perjury* in order to reform a government that I believe is anti-Christian? If I accept any significant public office, I must swear or affirm to support the Constitution—not just selected *parts* of it, but the *whole* document. In fact, even voting requires me to either take such an oath outright or, at the very least, *implicitly* acknowledge that I owe my highest allegiance to the Constitution. In this country, government power is ultimately in the hands of the voters. They are united by a shared *declaration* of beliefs and a mutual agreement—the Constitution—to lead the government in a certain way and to enforce its authority through military power. It seems that everyone has assumed from the start that military force would be essential to sustaining the government.

Therefore, it would be a serious act of fraud for anyone to show up at the ballot box as a voter while secretly rejecting the Constitution—someone who has no real intention of abiding by or supporting it as it stands, even until it can be lawfully changed. A non-resistant cannot do that without betraying God's government and violating the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Would the objector really have me join a group of people who have formally agreed that their governor will be the "commander-in-chief of the army and navy and of all military forces by land and sea"? Whose military forces are these supposed to be? *Mine*? As a non-resistant, how could I be part of an organization that maintains armies, navies, and other military forces? Am I to agree that our highest public servant will lead those forces and have the authority to "KILL, SLAY, AND DESTROY" our enemies! Am I to vote for someone to carry out those duties and consent to putting him under oath to *do so*? That would make me a most peculiar example of a non-resistant! Wouldn't I be proving to everyone around me that I wasn't truly opposed to war and everything that comes with it?

## DELEGATED POWER TO DECLARE WAR.

Will the objector really insist that I must publicly declare my agreement and support, as a co-governing citizen of the United States, that “Congress shall have power to **DECLARE WAR**”? That *my* elected representatives have the authority to commit this immoral act, in *my* name and at their discretion? That they have the power to turn the entire nation into godless thieves, murderers, and destroyers of the earth? That they can *legally permit* all the crimes and atrocities that come with war? *Never*. I will not agree to or consent to such a thing. It is an outrage. I will not accept any public office under those terms, I will not vote under those terms, and I will not join any church or government that embraces such a belief or requires its members to accept such a pledge.

## LETTERS OF MARQUE AND REPRISAL PIRACY.

The objector will have an even harder time convincing me to authorize any Congress of mine to issue those piratical commissions known as “letters of marque and reprisal.”<sup>1</sup> Even defensive war—fought on one’s own soil to repel murderous invaders—though the most justifiable form of war, is still forbidden by Christianity. How much more so, then, these outrageously immoral actions wrapped up in the term “letters of marque and reprisal”? What are they, really? Nothing more than licenses given to unscrupulous pirates to rob, loot, and murder defenseless people at sea. Their victims may be peaceful and honest individuals, yet if they belong to a country that, for some foolish or evil reason, Congress has declared war against, their possessions are suddenly considered fair game, and their lives subject to the greed of sea-going predators. Is a common highwayman to be universally despised and hanged for his crimes, while so-called Christian people empower their Congress to authorize piracy? And after agreeing that such acts should be carried out in his name, will a man still have the audacity to go around preaching *peace* and *non-resistance*? Does the objector expect me to make myself not only wicked but also completely absurd?

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<sup>1</sup> *Letters of marque and reprisal* were official licenses issued by governments, allowing private individuals or ships (known as privateers) to attack and capture enemy vessels during wartime, essentially legalizing private warfare. These documents were used primarily from the 16th to 19th centuries and served as a response to enemy aggression or piracy. Unlike pirates, privateers operated with *legal* backing and shared captured goods with their sponsoring government. The U.S. Constitution grants Congress the power to issue such letters, though none have been granted since the 1800s. Today, privateering is considered illegal under international law.



And yet, in spite of all this, I am expected to become a member of a national system founded on this political belief and agreement. I must be a voter. I must cast my vote for the President of the United States, who is designated “commander-in-chief of our army and navy.” I must consent to having him sworn into office, promising to carry out these duties faithfully. I must also be ready to accept various other public offices—each requiring me to take an oath to support the entire Constitution, including war, slavery, and everything else, as “the SUPREME LAW of the land!” And if the Constitution explicitly endorsed IDOLATRY, I’d be expected to support that, too! All of this is supposedly necessary so that I can have the influence needed to reform the government. But unless I *lie*, *perjure* myself, and completely abandon my commitment to non-resistance—even if temporarily—I am told I can never hope to help establish a truly Christian government. But I see a better path:

► STAYING FAITHFUL TO THE PRINCIPLE.

## LEGAL AND POLITICAL ACTION.

Many people take it for granted that *legal* and *political* action provides good people with essential tools for promoting moral reform—or at least for maintaining order in society. That’s why we often hear about the supposed duty to enforce certain penal laws, to vote for just rulers, and to make government “a terror to evildoers.” Now, I have no objection to any legal or political action that is genuinely *Christian* in nature. Nor do I deny that some short-term, local benefits have come from prosecuting lawbreakers, voting in elections, and carrying out the duties of public office under the current human systems of government. But I argue that very *little* of what passes as legal and political action today actually qualifies as truly CHRISTIAN. And I claim that people who are considered good actually do more *harm* than good to moral reform and healthy social order through their political and legal involvement. The common views on these matters are shallow, misleading, and harmful. Let’s consider the facts.

1. Isn’t it a *fact* that people who push for legal punishment and focus on prosecuting lawbreakers *often* become incapable of compassionate, patient, persuasive moral outreach? Don’t they end up being unpleasant to others and resented by those who break the law? Isn’t this *usually* the case? I believe it is. Relying on punitive force does more harm than good when it comes to encouraging moral reform. In fact, it tends to be *nearly* as destructive in *morality* as it is in *religion*.

2. Isn’t it a *fact* that equally decent people are found voting for all the different political parties, and that—believing they are doing their duty to God and humanity—they end up voting directly *for* and *against* the *same* candidates and policies, constantly cancelling out each other’s efforts? Everyone knows this is true. Would God command people to engage in such contradictory, adversarial behavior at the polls? Would enlightened human reason support it? No. Clearly, something is



wrong with this system. The Holy Spirit doesn't contradict the Holy Spirit, and Satan doesn't cast out Satan. Either these people aren't as *good* as they seem, or their beliefs about their moral responsibilities are *mistaken*.

3. Isn't it a *fact* that the most morally upright and careful politicians or candidates in each political party are usually found among the rank and file of their party or in *minor* roles? Are the wisest and best people ever the ones chosen to *lead*? Aren't the real decision-makers—the ones who control things behind the scenes—usually selfish and unethical? Whatever exceptions there may be, isn't this the *general rule*? We've all seen it to be true. So how can political action be such a great vehicle for moral reform and social order? The *good people* in politics aren't *leading*; they're *being led*. They're not *using* political systems for noble ends; they're being *used* by immoral strategists. They're positioned in *front*, *behind*, or on the *sidelines*—not because of their convictions, but based on how *useful* they are in swaying votes or appearances. Their purpose is to give their party *moral legitimacy* and *credibility*. They're the "stool pigeons," the "decoy ducks," the ones being *manipulated* by those in power. The way they're treated—and the corrupt game that's being played—is all the proof you need. And yet, many naïve people call this "having influence."

4. Isn't it a *fact* that out of the very *few* morally upright individuals who do rise to prominent political positions, hardly one in ten manages to avoid becoming either morally *compromised* or completely *disillusioned*?

So what do all these *facts* show? That under the current systems of government, legal and political action is generally anti-Christian. That so-called *good* people involved in politics are usually just *tools* used for harmful purposes. And that people who remain *outside* of political involvement are the ones most likely to inspire *politicians* and *legalists* to act with DECENCY.

## HOW TO REFORM GOVERNMENT.

Existing governments have their good qualities. They could certainly be worse than they are. In fact, they are only as good as the majority of the population demands—or is capable of appreciating. If a fully developed Christian constitution were offered to the public, they would likely reject it with scorn. Even if we could trick them into adopting such a constitution, they wouldn't know how to live under it.

Governments reflect the overall religious beliefs, moral values, and intellectual development of the people who live under them. A society with a corrupt or shallow religion, a flawed morality, and an underdeveloped intellect will naturally form a corrupt and shallow society and government. An Inuit, a Khoikhoi, or an Indigenous Australian would desire and administer an Inuit, Khoikhoi, or Indigenous Australian government. The reason we *Americans* do not have a Christian government is that, as a whole, our population is not Christian. The overall religion

of our people falls far below the standard of true Christianity. The collective conscience and moral sense of the people is semi-barbaric. And their general intellect is not yet refined enough by knowledge and self-discipline to recognize just how poor their religion and morality really are. As a result, they're not even *ashamed* of things like war and slavery. They don't see these great evils as a national disgrace or as moral curses. Before anything else, we must educate them, elevate their thinking, purify their moral sense, awaken their consciences, and reform their religious beliefs. This can't be accomplished by casting votes, seeking powerful offices, or binding ourselves to political systems that oppose Christian values. It must be done by faithfully teaching the pure precepts of Christianity and living as consistent Christian examples to others. Those who have been fortunate enough to receive and accept these higher truths must raise the true moral standard, let their light shine, and patiently continue the hard work of transforming hearts and minds. They must not do anything to tear down or hinder what is good in current society and government. Even more importantly, they must not damage their own moral testimony—either by opposing the government in a rebellious or violent way, or by participating in its sins. They must not compromise their principles by working with the government to *commit evil*, nor by fighting against its wrongs through *anti-Christian means*, nor by criticizing anything that is inherently good. This is the narrow, righteous path of Christ.

Once a significant portion of the population has been educated and converted to Christian non-resistance, public opinion will begin to shift powerfully against war and the whole system of violence and domination. Then even the less educated and less conscientious will start to follow the trend, and the remaining elements of barbarism will, one by one, be “cast to the moles and bats.” (Isiah 2:20) Eventually, the government itself will be Christianized, and even the most conscientious followers of the non-resistant Savior will be able to participate in it, performing whatever duties may truly serve the public good.

What a monumental task lies ahead! But it has already begun and will progress much faster than timid supporters or skeptical critics expect—though its completion is likely far in the future. In light of all this, how absurd would it be for a small group of non-resistants to jump into the world of politics and strap themselves to the machinery of power—hoping to persuade the confused masses to give up their idolatry! Such a move would be a betrayal of their cause and a ridiculous delusion. Their mission is “to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather to expose them.” Their job is not to tally votes, but to teach the truth. Their role is to present a model of what *ought to be*—not to conform to what currently *is*. They must speak out against the spiritual corruption in high places and help the public to see the nation's moral abominations for what they really are—disgusting and shameful. They are to shine the light of truth and call the people to repentance. They must reform the thirty thousand religious teachers of the land so that, instead

of supporting, justifying, blessing, or excusing military power and spectacle, they will learn to see and denounce it with the same revulsion they now feel for *idol-worship*. They must convert the hundreds of thousands of church members to the principles of early Christianity—like those held by the original disciples, who boldly declared in the face of death, “I am a Christian, and I cannot fight!” When we have accomplished all that, then we will begin to consider voting or holding office. By that time, we will likely no longer be forced to endorse Constitutions that make our presidents and governors “*commanders-in-chief of the army*,” or that give Congress the unchecked authority to “declare war and grant letters of marque and reprisal”—which are outrageous crimes against both God and humanity. And even if such demands remained, we would *continue* to strike at the root of the problem and *refuse to participate* until a better day arrived. This is the method by which true Christianity calls its followers to reform government. True, it's not according to “the wisdom of this world—which is folly with God,” but instead follows “the wisdom that comes from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, and sincere.” — James 3:17.

#### INJURIOUS FORCE NOT ESSENTIAL TO GOVERNMENT.

The opponent will now likely accuse me of being a utopian, a dreamer, or a fantasist for imagining a government that doesn't resort to war as a last resort—one that lacks the power to use deadly force to suppress individual crime or mob violence. They'll say such a government would be like a body without a soul, a house without a foundation, a powerless, non-resistant abstraction—something that could never exist on earth as long as human imperfection remains. I understand that this is the common view of government. But it's wrong—a product of ignorance, a complete delusion. A little reflection reveals how baseless this belief truly is. Its only apparent credibility comes from historical and lingering barbarism. Because people have behaved barbarically in the past, and because their laws and punishments were barbaric, it's assumed that things can't be any different. It's like the African living in the heart of the tropics who assumes ice can't exist simply because he's never seen it, or like all uneducated people who assume nothing exists beyond their personal experience.

Imagine someone confidently claiming that it's impossible for a man to live and do business in society without wearing a military hat, carrying a sword at his side, or having a musket slung over his shoulder—or at the very least, a pistol or bowie knife. That no one could survive in the world without either *actually* engaging in violence, *threatening* to use violence, or at the very least, *being armed* and ready for it. Who wouldn't recognize how absurd that claim is? A man's existence and his weapons don't inherently go together. A Christian non-resistant is just as much a man as someone who carries swords and daggers—actually more so, because he is less *brutish*. And the non-resistant is more likely to enjoy a longer life, better treatment from others, and real happiness in the world than the violent man. Or

imagine someone claiming that a family—or a well-run household—can't exist without guns and guard dogs to protect against intruders, and a supply of *switches* <sup>1</sup> to discipline the children. Wouldn't that just reveal the person's ignorance and moral immaturity? Or suppose someone claimed that there could be no such thing as a Christian church without the *Inquisition* and *public burnings*. <sup>2</sup> Intelligent people — those who reflect and have a morally enlightened, Christian outlook — know this simply isn't true.

#### UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES THE COUNTRY MIGHT HAVE A NON-RESISTANT GOVERNMENT.

Imagine if two-thirds of the people of the United States—including those *considered* Christians, philanthropists, intelligent, and law-abiding citizens—were fully committed to the principle of non-resistance as described in this work, even if they still had many imperfections. The government could then confidently do away with its army, navy, militia, capital punishment, and all forms of *violent* enforcement. With the kind of understanding necessary to bring about such a broad shift in public opinion, many communities would have already reorganized themselves through voluntary cooperation in ways that nearly eliminate drunkenness, laziness, vice, ignorance, poverty, and cruelty. This would create real opportunities, motivation, and support for personal growth and social responsibility. As a result, very few people would lack the care of wise and compassionate friends helping them thrive. Effective treatment could be provided for those who are struggling, and powerful preventative efforts would shape the next generation. In this context, imagine a truly Christian government managing the affairs of the states and the nation. Its workload would be light, easily manageable, and its responsibilities would impose minimal burdens on either officials or citizens. It would no longer need *thirty million* <sup>3</sup> dollars each year. Eighty <sup>4</sup> percent of government revenue would no longer go on warships, forts, weapons, and soldiers. Instead, even half of that money could be invested in rehabilitating the few remaining offenders, educating young people properly, and encouraging virtue throughout society.

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1 In the 19th-century context, a "supply of switches" refers to a collection of thin, flexible branches or rods, typically cut from a tree (often willow, hazel, or birch), used for corporal punishment, especially to discipline children.

2 Ballou uses the term "auto da fe" (auto-da-fé), which in Portuguese and Spanish literally means "act of faith." Historically, it refers to the public ceremonies held during the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions where accused heretics were sentenced by the Church. These events involved confessions, the reading of verdicts, and punishments such as penance, imprisonment, or execution—often by burning at the stake. Though originally a religious ritual, the term has become strongly associated with the brutal and violent punishments that followed, symbolizing the severe persecution carried out in the name of religious authority.

3 In 2024 the US defense budget was almost **1 trillion** dollars.

4 In 2024 the US defense budget was **20%** of US federal revenue (approx. 5 trillion dollars).

This would accelerate meaningful progress. If an individual did step out of line, the overwhelming pressure of renewed public values would close in on them like ocean waves, and minor, *nonviolent* intervention would be enough to prevent serious harm. Meanwhile, the root causes of such extreme cases would continue to be dismantled. At the same time, countries like the United Kingdom—and other major nations with which we share growing contact—would begin competing *not* in building powerful armies and navies, or in their capacity to harm others, but in leading the way to uplift and transform humanity. Patriotism would no longer strut around in military uniforms, brag about violent conquests, or provoke conflicts with fellow human beings simply because they were born elsewhere. Instead, it would take pride in superior justice, patience, humility, forgiveness—*love*.<sup>5</sup> Oh, glorious future—I see you approaching, ready to bless my country and the world. You are moving steadily and nobly on the far edge of the horizon. Clouds of confusion and chaos still lie between you and our rough present, hiding you from the noisy and distracted masses. Even the prophets can only faintly make out your beautiful form. But you are drawing closer. Angels are announcing your arrival. The morning stars are singing with joy, and the children of God are celebrating. When the time is right, heaven will meet earth in your presence, and the world will be restored to heavenly joy.

#### VIEW OF PRESENT ORDER OF THINGS, AND REMEDIES.

But we must turn back from this vision and once again listen to the scoffs of skeptics, the grumbling of stern bigots, and the confusion of Babylon the Great. We must hear those who make the sword, the gallows, and the prison their idols, denounce the principles of mercy, and praise the effectiveness of cruelty. “The world is full of criminals,” they say—“horrible criminals, prowling like wolves after their prey—and it’s foolish to believe we can rely on love, mercy, patience, and non-violent measures. The wicked must be executed. The immoral must be threatened with destruction. The lawless must be held in check by the fear of the noose and the prison cell. Humanity is too corrupt to be treated as brothers.” This is the language spoken by many who claim to be wise and upright—often considered leaders in society. But it is the language of people who must be spiritually reborn before they can enter the kingdom of God—Pharisees and Sadducees, proud religious and moral people who don’t truly know their own hearts, nor what

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5 Ballou uses the word *charity* where we might expect *love* today. In contemporary English, *charity* typically refers to acts of giving, such as donating money or helping those in need. However, in the 19th century—especially in biblical and theological contexts—*charity* often meant selfless, unconditional love, as famously described in 1 Corinthians 13:13. The 1611 King James Version reads, “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity,” while the 1979 New King James Version renders the same verse as, “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.”



kind of the spirit is guiding them. They don't examine the root causes of crime. They have no empathy for their fellow human beings—those who were born and raised in the worst conditions. They don't see that nine out of ten crimes committed by those they proudly punish could have been prevented if so-called “good people” had been *good enough* to care more about others outside their own family circles. These same people are great sinners in need of great mercy, yet they show little compassion for their fellow sinners of lower status. They live by a kind of social respectability and mistake it for true morality. They dress in the fashionable appearance of refined selfishness and imagine themselves acceptable to God. They are consumed with greed and excess while condemning *thieves* and *robbers*. Let them hold back their curses against those they view as criminals, and ask themselves some serious questions:

“How am I, by nature, any better than the murderers, robbers, and desperate people I despise? If I had been born to their parents, raised as they were, neglected by the privileged as they were, tempted as they were, and treated as they have been—would I be any different today? Would I not be among them—hated and hunted down as a lost cause? How much thought have I ever given to the reasons why some people turn out differently than others? How much of my life have I spent trying to prevent crime—by educating children, helping provide good homes, promoting honest work, and encouraging decency in adulthood? How much of my *thought*, *affection*, *time*, or *money* have I invested in those goals? Have I raised my children to think about these things? Have I discussed them with my neighbors? Have I raised them in my religious or academic communities? Have I tried to bring together friends to prevent poverty, vice, and crime? Or have I mostly focused on punishing it? Have I spent nearly all my time and effort on my own family and *myself*—chasing wealth, success, fame, self-interest, and comfort? Have I been living only for *myself* and my close relations? What has my religion actually done to make me a true follower of Jesus? Has my morality been anything more than socially acceptable behavior? Haven't I done things in secret that, if made public, would ruin me with shame? What do I really have to be proud of? Why am I so focused on punishing others instead of forgiving and rehabilitating them?” Wouldn't honest self-reflection like this humble many self-righteous people?

The truth is, if just one percent of the wealth currently hoarded and used selfishly by the “better” classes were instead used to prevent crime and rehabilitate offenders, there would hardly be a criminal left in society. If only the money currently spent on catching, prosecuting, and punishing criminals were wisely used to prevent and reform them, it would do ten times more good for society. But, sadly, just as *undertakers* profit from burying the dead, there are many in today's society who profit from pursuing and punishing criminals. Meanwhile, some of the worst offenders live comfortably, protected by legal and social structures that place them beyond the reach of justice. At the same time, the typical way people in the “better”



classes acquire wealth amounts to nothing more than socially acceptable gambling and exploitation—where the clever, the lucky, and the unscrupulous win at the expense of others, while the unlucky complain. Moreover, alcoholism and sexual immorality are allowed to thrive, with legal protections luring millions, through their *licensed* portals, down the path to destruction. Slavery still flourishes, with whips and chains controlling one-sixth of a supposedly free population—under the protection of our star-spangled banner! Is it any wonder that such a system—with its corrupt religion, shallow morality, greed, selfishness, and systemic oppression from the *ruling classes*—produces and perpetuates all kinds of crime and vice among the *lower classes*? Not at all.

That's why Christian non-resistance protests the sins of both the *punished* and the *punishing*. It calls for a deep and fundamental reform. And once that reform reaches a certain point, a government that rejects military power and harsh punishments will not only be possible—it will be inevitable. To show that such a government is truly feasible, I now present a clear, insightful, and irrefutable statement from M. Guizot, Prime Minister of France.

#### EXTRACT FROM M. GUIZOT'S LECTURES.

"Isn't it a crude and degrading view of government to think that it exists only—or even *primarily*—for the purpose of using force to make people obey?

"Let's set religion aside for a moment and consider civil government. Follow me, I ask you, through a simple chain of events. Society exists. Something needs to be done—whatever it may be—in society's name and for its benefit: a law must be enforced, a policy adopted, a judgment issued. In every case, there's a right way to meet society's needs: the right law to enact, the right decision to make, the right verdict to deliver. Whatever the issue at hand, whatever interest is involved, there is always a truth to be discovered—one that should guide the action and determine what should be done.

"The first responsibility of government is to seek out that truth: to figure out what is just, reasonable, and best for society. Once this truth is found, the next step is to declare it publicly. Then comes the task of introducing it to the public: getting people to understand and accept it, to recognize its fairness. This is about persuasion—convincing people it is the right course of action. Up to this point, is there any use of force? None at all. Now suppose that once this truth is identified and announced, everyone immediately understands and agrees with it; everyone willingly accepts that the government is right and chooses to obey. Still, no force has been used. Does that mean there is no government? Of course not. Government clearly exists—and it has successfully done its job. Force only comes into play when some individuals resist—when the truth proclaimed by authority fails to win everyone's approval or voluntary obedience. Then, and only then, government turns to force to compel compliance. This use of force is a result of human

imperfection—imperfection that exists both in those who govern and those who are governed. It cannot be completely avoided; civil governments will always need to use some degree of coercion. But even so, it's clear that government does not consist of coercion. Whenever governments can avoid using force, they are glad to do so—benefiting everyone. In fact, the more a government can rely solely on moral influence—on appealing to reason and understanding—the more faithfully it expresses its true purpose and the better it fulfills its mission. This isn't weakness, as people often claim. It's simply a different, broader, and more powerful way of governing. Governments that rely most heavily on force accomplish far less than those that almost never need to use it. When government appeals to the public's understanding, engages their free will, and operates through reason and persuasion, it does not shrink or limit itself—it expands and elevates its power. It is then that government achieves the most and reaches its highest goals. On the other hand, when a government is constantly forced to use its physical power, it becomes weak and limited—it accomplishes little, and it does so poorly.

"So the essence of government is not found in coercion or brute force. Rather, it lies in a system of methods and powers designed to discover, in every situation, what is best for society: to find the truth that ought to guide society, and to persuade people to accept, adopt, and respect that truth freely and willingly. Therefore, I believe I've shown that government is both necessary and valid—even if no force were ever needed, or even if it were absolutely forbidden." – *History of Civilization in Europe, Lecture 5*.

## CONCLUSION.

Is this not a satisfactory and conclusive argument? It should be. These are not the words of a non-resistant fanatic or a naïve idealist, but of Monsieur Guizot, the intelligent and accomplished Prime Minister of King Louis Philippe. Let those who arrogantly dismiss the idea of a truly Christian government reflect on this and ask themselves: does their skepticism come from knowledge—or from *ignorance*? To a reasonable mind, there should be little doubt. The key requirement for establishing such a government has already been identified: it is the religious, moral, and intellectual reform of the people, leading to a deeper Christian faith, a more awakened conscience, a more enlightened understanding, and a purer moral code. Non-resistance embraces this noble cause and will pursue it steadily until its blessed fulfillment. To advance this work, the faithful must set aside worldly ambition—whether financial, political, or military—and cast off every burden that holds them back. They must press onward toward the goal, striving for the prize of their high calling in Christ Jesus, accepting the hardship of the cross and bearing the shame, until they enter into his glory and share in the true majesty of his kingdom. For he is the King of kings and Lord of lords, and in the end, the kingdoms of this world will become his—ruled in *righteousness and peace*.

"I've thought at gentle and ungentle hour,  
 Of many an act and giant shape of power;  
 • • • Of bruised rights, and flourishing bad men,  
 And virtue wasting heavenwards from a den:  
 Brute force, and fury, and the devilish drouth  
 Of the foul cannon's ever gaping mouth;  
 And the bride-widowing sword; and the harsh bray  
 The sneering trumpet sends across the fray;  
 And all which blights the people-thinning star  
 That selfishness invokes – the horsed war,  
 Panting along with many a bloody mane:  
 I've thought of all this pride, and all this pain,  
 And all the insolent plentitudes of power;  
 And I declare by this most quiet hour,  
 • • • that power itself has not one half the might  
 Of *Gentleness*. 'Tis want to all true wealth;  
 The uneasy madman's force to the wise health;  
 Blind downward beating, to the eyes that see;  
 Noise to persuasion, doubt to certainty;  
 The consciousness of strength in enemies,  
 Who must be strained upon, or else they rise;  
 • • • Or as all shrieks and clangs, with which a sphere  
 Undone and fired, could rake the midnight ear,  
 Compared with that vast dumbness nature keeps  
 Throughout her starry deeps,  
 Most old, and mild, and awful, and unbroken,  
 Which tells a tale of Peace beyond what'er was spoken."

*Leigh Hunt.*